



During a vigil in Pomfret on June 5th, a 30-foot sign showed the names of 75 unnamed black victims of police in the United States. Read Carol Davidge's article on page 7.

Photo by Cris Cadiz.

July 2020

A little paper big on community

FREE

Neighbors



In my own words...

A good part of my life I grew up in a community and went to school in a town with very little diversity. For a good part of my life I wasn't aware that someone with a different physical appearance could be treated so inhumanly. For a long time if you asked me to give you an explanation as to what racism is, I would've probably said something like, "racism is when there were slaves and they were slaves because of their skin color," thinking it was just a part of history. That's what I would've said, because that's all I was ever really ever taught and told about racism. But when I started going to a magnet school with probably close to 90% more diversity than what I originally knew, I learned that racism wasn't just a part of history, but that it is still a huge problem that had still not been resolved. I learned how some of my closest friends and other human beings were being treated so wrongly, and not being treated with the equality they really deserved. When I saw this happening firsthand, I knew I had to do something to help make a difference. After that, whenever I got the chance, whether it was a family dinner, a get together with friends, or a bonfire with my mom's friends, I used any opportunity I got to spread awareness and talk about all of the things wrong and what was happening due to racism. I did that for as long as I could once the COVID-19 outbreak started, but it was difficult. That is why when the terrible event of George Floyd's death occurred, and all of the worldwide protests were starting, I knew I wanted to be a part of the ongoing fight for equality. I just needed to find something I could do to help make a difference.

continued on page 3

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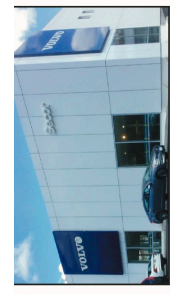
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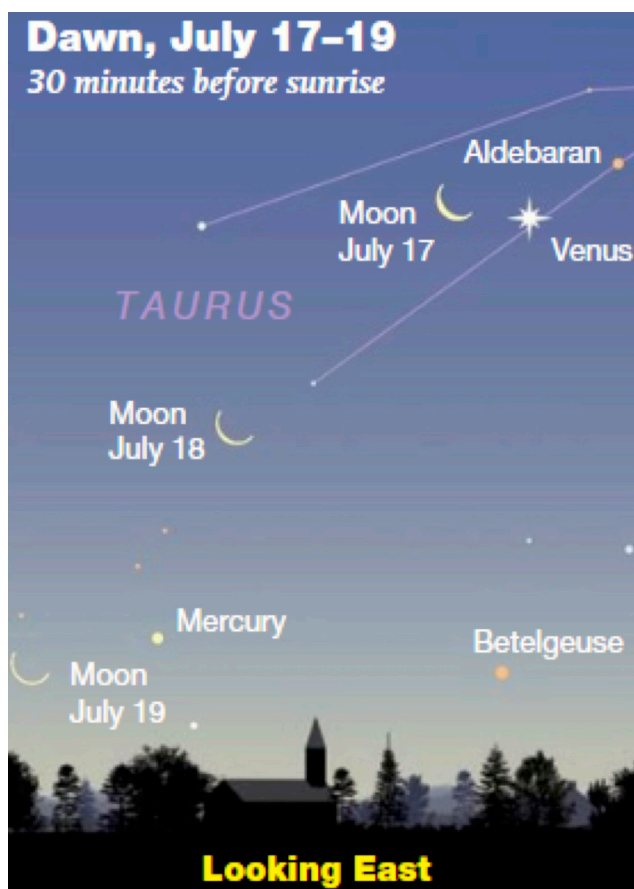
Looking Up:

Falling From the Sky

By Bob Grindle

Living on a quiet country road in Hampton, the couple watched through much of the early Spring while a pair of red-tailed hawks showed interest in a towering hickory on their front lawn. Sitting occasionally on the front porch of the home they had personally designed and recently finished building, they would carefully watch the comings and goings of the winged pair. It wasn't long before the two hawks started bringing small branches and bits of hard-to-identify material to the tree and in a week or so there was what appeared to be a small brush pile in the leafless treetop. These were no longer simply potential predators of small pets or the barnyard flock, these birds were now hardworking new neighbors building a nest and likely preparing to raise a family. It was time to invest in binoculars, do some reading up on raptors and, who knows, maybe even revise opinions.

Rather quickly, the smaller member of the team became a lone traveler back and forth to the nest, carrying what looked to be mice and even some small birds and snakes. Reading suggested that the male was now bringing meals to the female who was probably sitting on eggs, and that it would be more than a month before the eggs hatched. The humans who were watching this were excited. The wait seemed long. The trees leafed out and now it was hard to get a good close up look at the nest. Drat! They heard the hatchlings before they got a chance to see the—baby red-tailed hawks are noisy. The adult hawks worked tirelessly, bringing all manner of food home to feed their young and as the weeks wore on occasional glimpses through their new binoculars of the rapidly growing babies seemed a satisfying and fascinating reward to the patient



homeowners. One afternoon, walking down their drive to get the mail, they spotted one of the adult hawks, who had recently taken to simply flying over the nest and dropping newly caught prey down to their young (probably in the interest of keeping up with increasingly voracious appetites... anyone who's raised a teenager knows what that's about.) This particular bit of foodstuff missed the nest and there, falling from the sky directly toward the curious humans was a snake—a medium size snake... does it even matter?... of course not. The snake landed with a slapping sound in the leaves next to the driveway. It was about a two foot long corn snake. They left it there. Nature would find a

use for it.

There is something mythic about serpents falling from the sky, a something-under-the-bed-in-the-dark that plays on our uncertainties, or a scorpion-in-the-boot kind of creepiness that is always worse in the imagination than in the moment. It is the middle of the night as I lie here recalling this story of nesting red-tails and it amuses me to think how easily stories can crawl from the dim reaches of a memory whose filing system was long ago shaken from its shelves by some sort of tremor and now is scattered across the floors of several mental cupboards.

There are stories scattered across the night skies of July as well. Tales crafted and observations recorded over the hundreds of centuries that our species has looked up over its many diverse heads and out into the ever-changing, and yet magically the same, cosmic expanse. Comfortably, the Moon... the one the cow jumped over, ET travelled in front of, home of the man in the Moon, inspiration for thousands of songs, probably millions of wedding proposals, and endless sighs of wonderment, to say nothing of a way native populations across the globe have kept track of the passage of time... yes, the Moon is there as it has been for more than 54 billion months. July's full Moon, July 4th, is commonly known as the Buck Moon, but many native populations knew it as the Thunder Moon because of the prevalence of thunderstorms. Despite the bright moonlit night of the 4th, Saturn and Jupiter will shine brightly in the low southeast sky around 11 o'clock. The two planetary giants will be around all month and after midnight the red planet Mars will join them... the thought that at some distant time in the future humans may have set up colonies on Mars and be looking back at Earth almost takes my breath away. It seems a trifle escapist, in more ways than one.

What Saturn, Jupiter and Mars put on the night time table, Venus will gladly see, and raise them. The mornings of July belong to Venus, and she dazzles anyone who steps out early and looks up. By mid-month in the eastern sky, the quickly waning, crisply defined Moon plays a beautiful second to Venus' star power. Add in the rusty sparkle of the eye of Taurus, Aldebaran, and you have something to smile about as you step off into your day.

Back in late February, when the world began to whisper of a possible pandemic, and then into early March, when it became clear things were about to change, none of us could have foreseen what we have been through, and it's only been four months... and it's still not over. In a very real way, this reminds me of election night back in November of 2016... and it's still not over. May you all enjoy the coming month and hopefully no serpents will fall from the sky as you look up.

Bob Grindle is a Windham Hospital Retiree and 2017 ECSU graduate who concentrated in Astronomy.



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P.O. Box 430
Ashford, CT 06278
phone: 860-933-3376
email: neighborspaper@yahoo.com
website: neighborspaper.com

Tom King, Editor & Publisher
Dagmar Noll, Calendar Editor
Steve Woron, Mac Guru
Marisa Calvo, Graphic Design

Writers: Delia Berlin, David Corsini, Phoebe Godfrey, Bob Grindle, John Murphy, Dagmar Noll, Dennis Pierce, Mark Svetz, P.K. Willey, Steve Woron, Tom Woron, Loretta Wrobel

The Purpose of Neighbors:
-To encourage reading
-To provide a place where ideas, writing, artwork and photographs of area residents can be shared
-To encourage people to get involved in their communities
-To begin to solve national and global problems on a local basis
-To provide useful information
-To serve the inhabitants and environment of our region

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What do we tell the kids?

By Loretta Wrobel



Last week I was listening to a news talk show while driving. The topic was young minority kids protesting. When asked why he was protesting, one boy explained he was protesting because a policeman killed a black man. I burst into tears when I heard this blunt truth that is America right now. Our children are living in the reality that racism is alive and thriving in our Country in 2020.

Not that I didn't know that some policemen are killing black people, particularly black men. I do know and am well aware of racial injustice in our world. The intensity and shock that our children are witnessing this horrible situation day after day, all over our country, tears at my heart. What kind of world have we created for our youngsters? Do we care that they are learning that America is not the land of opportunity? The truth shouts out that the protectors (our officers in blue) do not protect black Americans!

I was deeply touched by the differences in how we raise and teach our kids. Minority youngsters get a raw picture of what life is like and what to expect early on. White children may or may not get any information regarding the precarious threats to a person of color. Suddenly, I recalled an incident that occurred decades ago when I was working for Child Welfare. (Child Welfare has since morphed into our present DCF over the years.) This was my first real job as a social worker, and I was visiting two young twin black girls who were in foster placement. We were chatting in the car, and stopped at the local ice cream place. Returning to the car after purchasing some ice cream for the youngsters, I remarked that our treatment was shocking—the server was rude. I couldn't understand it. The girls piped in without missing a beat, "We know why he treated you that way. Because we are black and you are white!" I was stunned. In my mid-twenties, I was clueless, and these little girls really had more awareness at age six than I did. What an eyeopener.

This is the truth about racism. The oppressed understand, and have to be aware to survive. The protected group has little if any awareness, and doesn't get it. What the oppressed group is screaming about is beyond their understanding. When I was involved with setting up a shelter for women who experienced domestic violence, one person expressed their opinion that the women brought it on themselves. This was a professional male mental health worker!!!! If we blame the women, then we don't need to examine our own conscious and unconscious violent behavior. If white people believe that racism is fabricated so black people can take advantage of the system, they do not need to probe their unconscious biases and learned racist behavior.

Racism is real. It is powerful and unjust. It attempts to judge people by the color of their skin, not by who they are. It creates an unfair advantage for those who are white-skinned, and presumes all persons of color are undeserving of equal treatment and opportunity. The power of racism is that you don't experience the cruelty unless you are a person of color.

When people ask What do black people want, the short answer is simply to be treated equally and fairly. "I am not prejudiced. I have black friends." I hear this lament from white, seemingly kind, people. They can't understand why blacks are infuriated and traumatized. That's because they are not black!

A black single mom poignantly revealed to me that whenever her teenage son left the house, she wondered if he would return. She prayed that he didn't get caught in the midst of a racist incident. I was struck by her ongoing fear, which no white parent fears. We have tons to learn about how our country has perpetuated racist behavior since its earliest beginnings.

The present situation in our country has brought systemic racism front and center. The stamina and bravery of the protesters who are forcing us to look at the injustice, cruelty, and hatred of discrimination, is astounding. This horrifying reality is difficult to swallow. The sheer numbers of black killings in our country by public servants who have taken an oath to protect us is chilling.

It is barely tolerable for me to comprehend and understand how to possibly explain to a child that even though racism is wrong, it exists in every city in our country. How to explain people being disrespected and treated like disposable goods.

In school, kids are taught not to see color, and this is not valid. Of course, we all see color, which is not the problem. The issue is when we see people of color, do we see diversity and celebrate our richness? Because we exist in a racist culture, our conditioned response to blackness is to diminish rather than to honor our differences and accept our commonality. More salient, the person of color is deserving of all the rights and privileges that I as a person of white skin has. Can we expand ourselves to include all peoples without negative judgements and derogatory labels?

As babies, we learn to relate to those who look like our caregivers. In a segregated world, the white infant sees people who are white. The young child develops a preference toward those he/she spends time with. In an integrated society, the baby would respond to all humans and see everyone as people worthy of respect.

How do we talk to our small ones about prejudice, injustice, and cruelty? How do we acknowledge that we are participating in this nightmare, where so many more people of color are mistreated, abused, and humiliated by those in power? Perhaps the question is not what to tell our kids. The bitter question is what do we tell ourselves?

In My Own Words...

continued from front cover

That's why when I found out my brother was attending as many protests as he could, I wanted to help him since I wasn't able to go to the protests myself, because I had no way of getting to the protests. So after some thinking, my grandfather (an amazing artist) suggested that I paint something for my brother to carry at the protests. I agreed that that was the perfect way for me to do something to make a difference during these times and what better way than to do so through art. I chose the picture to paint because it shows George Floyd who was brutally and wrongly killed, and treated with unnecessary violence because of his skin color. And he is just one of the many examples of how far unreasonable hate can go, and that people still see that people with different skin color don't deserve to be treated equally and like a human. But at the end of the day everyone is truly a human being and are exactly the same on the inside. Also, I thought it was such a beautiful idea to use so many different and bright colors in the painting to show how no one is defined by just their skin color and how they

appear. Everyone has so much more to what makes them who they are and that their skin color isn't who they are. They have their own unique traits and personalities just like you and me and everyone else. I believe change is long overdue and I am so overjoyed to see so many people standing together to make change happen. Something that I keep hearing that I feel is really true to me is, "I'm not black, but I see you. I'm not black, but I hear you. I'm not black, but I stand with you." I am here to fight for change and I don't intend to look the other way or give up until I see change happen.

Skye Martin

Ed. note: Skye Martin, 13, of Coventry, made the poster for her brother, Chase Martin, who is a UConn student. Chase displayed it at local protest gatherings. Skye found the image on the internet, then drew it and painted it. It is her first painting of a person. She will be a freshman at E. O. Smith High School in Storrs this fall. Artist Scott Rhoades of Mansfield is her grandfather.

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The Evolution of Self-Presentation

By Delia Berlin

It's summer, it's hot and we are still mostly self-isolating to avoid getting COVID-19.

Some may wonder why we are still wearing clothes. Many of us are still interacting with others via FaceTime, Skype or Zoom, which may justify upper body attires. But why bother with shoes? Or pants? If you had these thoughts, you were not alone. By the end of March, Walmart was already reporting increased sales of tops, but not bottoms. Lipstick sales are also dropping; all lipstick can do these days is stain your mask. Eye makeup sales, however, may fill in this sales gap.

For most of us, self-presentation is so internalized that it becomes an automatic part of our identity. The person that we are wears hair and clothes in a particular style. The novel coronavirus pandemic is challenging us in this area. As our social behaviors were forced to change, the type of self-presentation required had to be tweaked. In addition, some of the resources we use for self-presentation, such as clothes shopping or hair styling, became scarce or unavailable.

The American Psychological Association defines self-presentation as "any behaviors intended to convey a particular image of, or particular information about, the self to other people." According to the theory of self-presentation, consciously or subconsciously, people try to create and project an image of themselves through verbal and nonverbal displays, to influence impressions formed by their audiences.

In addition to individual behaviors, impressions about people are controlled by personal and "background staging" rituals, including fashion, dress, makeup and hair style, home décor and garden design. The things we wear, the cars we drive, and every object we display, carries a message. While we may not set out to say anything when we get dressed, our dress will definitely say something to others we interact with.

The messages we try to convey, may not be received as intended. For example, some may try to make a good impression in a job interview by wearing garments or accessories that don't fit the culture or style of the hiring company. Or, the jewelry worn to impress a new date may be considered repelling by the party in question. Our social world is plagued with these unintended miscommunications, in spite of our best intentions.

When a global pandemic drastically changes who we interact with and how, the rules of self-presentation are bound to change as well. Personally, I have done my best to avoid changing my regular grooming routine. Since I find most of the changes imposed by the pandemic quite depressing, I don't want to add to the blues by "letting myself go" and finding myself looking much older every time I catch a glimpse of a mirror. Already, I'm not getting any younger, I'm not going to the gym, I'm not shopping for clothing or accessories, and there is no hairdresser to assist with my hair.

Fortunately for me, I adhere to a low-maintenance plan. I'm not much of a shopper, I live in an area where I can walk to try to stay in shape, and my hair has been doing whatever it wants to since I was born. I never colored my greys and I'm thankful for that. Grey hair certainly does add years to one's appearance, but very gradually. Even this slow process can be shocking to our ever-youthful identity. I can't imagine what turning grey suddenly in the midst of a pandemic would feel like. Yet, many have been forced to find out, due to the closing of hair salons.

So far, if I get up in the morning, take a shower and get dressed in the same manner I've grown accustomed to, I can feel reasonably normal. I try to be well groomed by the time I come down the stairs to meet David's gaze and to FaceTime with my granddaughter. When I leave the house, I add a cloth face mask to my attire (which at my age can't hurt). I still don't own enough masks to assure proper color coordination with the rest of my garments. But unless a vaccine gets developed unexpectedly soon, that time will come.

These days, some of our self-presentation has been unfortunately politicized. A face mask that one may see as simple personal protection and infection control, others may see as a political statement. We have a right to our opinions, but in the last few months people have been killed for wearing a mask, for not wearing a mask, or for asking another person to wear one. It's time to dial down that level of anger.

Most people are not fully aware of their self-presentation and its evolution. Self-presentation is not static.



Even those of us who are not fashion conscious retain sensitivity to trends. Just look at eyeglasses or swimsuits in movies. One doesn't have to go too many years back to find those items completely outdated. Normally, we are constantly exposed to visual stimuli and subliminal messages by moving around our communities and interacting with others. One of the problems of isolation is a sharp decrease in this type of social input. I find that decrease terribly uninspiring. The exchange of ideas that accompanies our varied interactions starts to dry out and creativity suffers. I find myself struggling to come up with new menus, outfit combinations, themes to write about, provoking conversations. I need new blood going into my creative process. I hope this summer will give us enough of a reprieve to safely see enough friends, to get recharged before the cold returns.

A development that I've found fascinating to watch involves background changes in TV broadcasting. We usually watch the PBS Newshour and a few other news programs on cable. As reporters and consultants join these programs from their homes, instead of studios, it's been interesting to see how they arrange their surroundings to present themselves to the public.

For the most part, newscasters have not changed their own appearance. Occasionally, men show up in a slightly more relaxed attire, such as shirt and jacket, without a necktie. But their backgrounds have been a constant source of amusement for me. Sometimes, these backgrounds uncover personal information that we haven't had access to before. I find that intimacy a little distracting. We may learn that a person is very disorganized, by glimpsing at huge piles of papers and wires exposed behind them. Or, we may see evidence of the opposite – some spaces are super neat, seemingly staged with picture-ready décor. We may find out that a reporter owns several cats or has an affinity for plants. We may catch the view from their windows, or get a taste of their art work. We never had access to so many personal details about the lives of these individuals in the past.

Most surprising to me has been these persons' proclivity to present themselves in front of bookcases. This tendency has been almost universal. Perhaps this will change, as the trend may become passé, but I have observed that easily 80% of reporters, politicians and consultants set themselves up in front of bookshelves, as if they need to convince us that they do, indeed, read books. Is this a sign of intellectual insecurity? Perhaps they share a natural defensiveness, elicited by constant accusations of providing fake news. Or, maybe this signals a respect for science and serious data, at a time when those have frequently come under attack.

I have also suspected, in a few cases, that the programs' parent organizations may have offered a stick or a carrot for news staff to improve their décor. Maybe they were told to clean up, after a first showing in a cluttered space. Or maybe they provided them with the services of an interior designer. But I assure you that more than a few messy or spartan home studios have soon become more attractive, organized, and adorned with plants and wall art, after an initial less-than-perfect impression.

It surprises me, to some extent, that the privacy of these newscasters isn't better protected. They could have been provided with background banners, instead of having to display their personal living spaces. I may be paranoid, but I'm not sure it's a good idea to broadcast your reading preferences, surroundings and partial floorplan to the entire world. I suppose that those who desire such privacy could still have that option, by selecting a plain wall or a curtain as background.

Not everyone has to worry about appearing on TV, but we all have to present ourselves to the world, in person or online. While much of our self-presentation is internalized, rather than carefully planned, cameras do tend to make us self-conscious. The picture-in-picture is there, like an intrusive mirror that we may be unwise to ignore. As some phones have the same ringtone for voice and video calls, you may think you are picking up the phone, when you may actually be "opening the door" – beware! You better get dressed. Deodorant is no longer required, but it can't hurt to maintain the habit.

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Columbia Student Awarded Scholarship

Submitted by Ruth I. O'Neil

The Song-a-Day Music Fund is proud to announce that Alaina Magaldi of Columbia, CT has been selected as the 2020 recipient of the Annual Song-a-Day Music Scholarship.

Ms. Magaldi is a 2020 graduate of E.O. Smith High School in Mansfield. During her high school career, Alaina has been a member of the E.O. Smith Concert Choir and Chamber Singers ensembles under the direction of Amanda Sprague Hanzlik. She has participated in many school concerts, events and competitions. In 2018, Alaina won Second Place in the Vocal Competition in the annual Windham Regional Arts Council's Young Artist Competition. An accomplished guitar player, Alaina is a student at the Song-a-Day Music Center, not only of the guitar but also Voice and Piano. Ms. Magaldi has written many songs and has performed them at various community events in the area.



This fall, Alaina begins her college studies at the University of Connecticut, Storrs Campus, where she plans to major in Music Composition and Production. Alaina also plans to continue to perform not only as a solo artist but also in choral groups.

Since 2002, The Song-a-Day Music Fund has awarded an annual scholarship to an area graduating senior who plans further study in the area of music. The Song-a-Day Music Fund is operated by the Song-a-Day Music Center, 2809 Boston Turnpike in Coventry. The fund is committed to supporting the study and efforts of emerging and practicing musicians. To make a contribution to or for more information about the Song-a-Day Music Fund, contact the Song-a-Day Music Center at 860-742-6878 or songadaymusic.com.

How You Can Help Protect Wild Birds in Your Yard

(StatePoint) You may not think about it often, but wild birds use your lawn as a rest stop and place to call home. As you spruce up your lawn and garden for the season, there are simple steps you can take to protect them and help them thrive.

According to Spencer Schock, founder of WindowAlert, makers of bird-friendly products for homes, the following changes are easy to implement in order to create a safe harbor for wild birds:

Plant native species: Planting native species on your property is one of the most impactful ways you can improve your local environment, as well as make your lawn and garden a healthy habitat for wild birds and other fauna. Native plant species provide birds with food and places to rest and nest. Birds in turn, spread pollen and seeds, while acting as a natural pesticide. Speaking of which, gardening organically will also go a long way to protecting the health and safety of feeding birds.

Make windows visible: Up to 1 billion birds die annually from striking windows in US, according to the American Bird Conservancy. The good news is that it's relatively easy and affordable to prevent your home from being part of the problem. Special window decals that reflect ultraviolet sunlight, a wavelength of light noticeable to birds, have been proven to substantially reduce the likelihood of bird strikes. Giving the appearance of slightly frosted translucent glass but glowing like a stoplight for birds, those from WindowAlert feature a range of decorative patterns. To boost protection for birds, you can also apply a high-tech liquid called WindowAlert UV Liquid in between decals. More information, as well as useful application tips, can be found by visiting windowalert.com.

Monitor cats: Monitor your cat's time outdoors to ensure they are not terrorizing or hunting birds. An enclosed play area for your cat is the most effective way to keep birds in your yard safe from your furry companion's natural instincts.

Good deeds start at home. This season, do your part to help migrating bird populations reach their destinations safely.



Neighbors Writer Wins CT SPJ Award

By Neighbors Staff

For the first time, *Neighbors*, known as 'A Little Paper Big on Community,' is on a list of Connecticut professional news outlets whose journalists won Excellence in Journalism awards by the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists (CT SPJ). The monthly newspaper serves northeastern Connecticut through distribution at many drop-off locations in the region and online at neighborspaper.com. The 2019 CT SPJ awards were announced on Facebook Live on May 21 and posted on their website, connecticutspj.org/and-the-winners-are. The virtual event took place since the annual awards dinner, at the Hawthorne in Berlin, was cancelled due to the coronavirus. Journalists in other states judge Connecticut journalism work. This year, over 300 winners were decided by members of the Utah Chapter of SPJ who looked at more than 800 entries.

Neighbors freelance reporter and photographer Corey Sipe, of Uncasville, won the 2019 3rd place award in the regional B feature story category for the article he wrote "Thursday Night Thunder Car Cruise Brings Community Together," neighbors.pageflip.site/editions/NP44180#page/10, which was featured on pages 10 and 11 in the August 2019 edition of *Neighbors*. Regional B consists of 22 medium and small-sized newspapers, publications, and news websites in Connecticut. The story included nine photos he took of car owners, classic cars, and award winners. The Thursday Night Thunder Car Cruises are sponsored by the Ashford Business Association, ABA, (www.ashford-business.org) and have been held in the parking lot of the Midway Restaurant and Pizza in Ashford. The cruises help support community unity, local businesses, local non-profit organizations, local schools and local residents.

The ABA website states that, at press time, the car cruises are on hold for 2020 due to the coronavirus "as we wait for it to be safe to gather in groups". The location has been moved to the parking lot of St. Philips Church, 64 Pompey Hollow Rd., Ashford, since the cruises outgrew space at Midway. They will continue to have music from a DJ and raise money for local charities. There will be food for sale from The Country Butcher, of Tolland. The cruise nights, starting at 5 p.m., will be the second Thursday of each month with tentative dates of July 9, August 13, and September 10. Updates will be provided at facebook.com/AshfordBusinessAssociation.

This is not the first time that Sipe has received recognition from CT SPJ for his work at Neighbors Paper. He was the sole finalist for the 2018 CT SPJ Excellence in Journalism Award in the leisure regional B category for "Much to See for All Ages at Railroad Museum," about exhibits at the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum in Willimantic, and "Enjoy the Rails to Trails on Connecticut Trails Day," previewing fun activities on Eastern Connecticut's rails-to-trails in Portland, East Hampton, Colchester, Hebron, Lebanon, Pomfret, Manchester, Vernon, and

Bolton. The museum article included information on ongoing projects at the museum including attractions designed for children. The article had seven photos of volunteers and visitors. Both articles were published on pages 12 and 13 in the June 2018 edition of Neighbors Paper and online at https://neighbors.pageflip.site/editions/NP26214#page/12.

Sipe has a passion for covering news in northeastern Connecticut and has continued that in writing for The Connecticut Times. He was a 2018 CT SPJ Excellence in Journalism Award finalist in the business regional B category for "Locals Provide Suggestions for East Brook Mall's Future" theconnecticuttimes.wordpress.com/2018/06/16/locals-provide-suggestions-for-east-brook-malls-future. The article discussed specific stores and restaurants that residents on social media indicated they would like to see fill the vacant spaces of the Mansfield shopping mall. Sipe was also a finalist that year in the CT SPJ Excellence in Journalism contest's health regional B category for "New Bicentennial Pond Universal Trail is Designed for Those with Limited Mobility." theconnecticuttimes.wordpress.com/2018/05/02/new-bicentennial-pond-universal-access-trail-opens-designed-for-those-with-limited-mobility. The article detailed the newly installed handicapped-accessible trail at the Mansfield park and how important the park is to the community.

Sipe worked as a full-time reporter for The Chronicle, covering The Quiet Corner, for more than two years. During that time, he won the 2016 1st place CT SPJ Excellence in Journalism Award in the local reporting category for Regional B publications with the story "Hope for the Holidays: Willimantic PD, Community Open Hearts for Girl" which was published in The Chronicle, on the front page, Dec. 10, 2016. It can be viewed at theconnecticuttimes.wordpress.com/hope-for-the-holidays. The article centered on the Willimantic Police Department's efforts to help a little girl who was the victim of a house fire. The daily newspaper is based in Willimantic. He also won the 2016 2nd place CT SPJ Excellence in Journalism Award in the reporting series category for Regional B publications with the "Relay for Life: Survivor Stories. This was a series of front-page articles in The Chronicle profiling local cancer survivors who were involved with the 2016 American Cancer Society's Relay for Life event at the Eastern Connecticut State University Athletic Complex in Mansfield. The articles were published between April 30 and Oct. 17, 2016. They can be viewed at theconnecticuttimes.wordpress.com/survivor-stories-series.

He has a lifetime of journalism experience with his writing featured on news publications and websites including The Chronicle, Reminder Newspapers, The Connecticut Times, Yahoo, Hartford Courant, Patch, New Haven Register, Thompson Villager, Pictorial Gazette, Main Street News, Montville Times, and The Resident. He is a 2004 graduate of Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic with bachelor's degrees in Communications and Political Science.



Corey Sipe

Contributed photo.

Take Steps to Protect Your Skin While Working in the Yard

(StatePoint) Do you spend summer days outdoors mowing the lawn, tending to the garden and working on the house? Here are a few steps you can take to help you care for and protect your skin as you complete your seasonal chores:

Dress right: A few wardrobe considerations go a long way. Opt for long, lightweight clothing in light colors, which can protect your skin from sun exposure while keeping you cool. Sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat can provide further coverage. If possible, arrange to spend the bulk of your time outdoors either before 10 in the morning or after 4 in the afternoon to avoid exposure while the sun's rays are at their strongest.

Don't forget the SPF. Apply sunscreen and a lip balm containing SPF before heading outdoors. Reference the bottle's instructions to ensure you are reapplying as-needed. Dermatologists recommend an SPF

of 30 or higher for extended outdoor activity. For lawn care and gardening, you should also be on the lookout for a product that's resistant to sweat.

Promote resilience: There are many outdoor elements that produce free radicals, such as sun exposure and pollution, and exposure to these free radicals can have harsh effects on the body. To help protect and maintain healthy, youthful-looking skin, consider incorporating Heliocare Daily Use Antioxidant Formula into your morning routine. In a survey conducted by Ferndale Healthcare Inc. between Nov 2019 and Feb 2020, of 923 U.S. dermatologists, more than half personally use Heliocare, and 87 percent of these experts recommend it to their patients.

"I tell all my patients who ask me how to maintain their skin's youthful appearance to consider taking Heliocare, particularly if they spend a lot of time outdoors," says New York City dermatologist, Dr. Rachel Nazari-

an.

The antioxidant-rich proprietary extract in Heliocare, Ferblock PLE Technology, has been studied for over 25 years by leading dermatologists.

To learn more and to access additional skin care information, visit heliocare.com.

Adopt healthy habits: Drinking plenty of water and ensuring you are getting electrolytes can help regulate the balance of fluid in the body for healthy-looking skin. Also, be sure to get a great night's sleep. Not only do you deserve it after a hard day of work, but sufficient sleep is beneficial to skin health.

This summer, treat your skin right while working in the yard. Take steps to protect it from the inside out.

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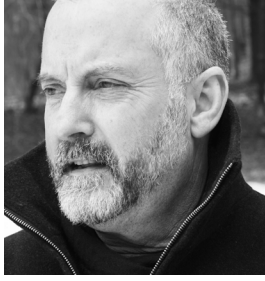
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From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

The Soul of the Garden

By C. Dennis Pierce

What is the soul of a garden? Or maybe should I say “who” is the soul of the garden? In theory, it is the caretaker, the farmer, that individual that transforms a barren piece of land or a plot that is taken over by weeds and miraculously turns it into a landscape that provides nutrition, solace and the feeling of accomplishment. The soul, figuratively, as philosophers suggested, takes care of the body, and in this case the garden.



So, what form does the garden take on? If you get a glimpse of the local Mansfield Community Gardens that are offered by the Town of Mansfield in collaboration with the University of Connecticut, you will find unique 20' x 30' plots that are designed by the individual's creative eye or just an attempt to beat the war against the ever intruding weeds. Each garden represents the design of the gardener. It is their vision, creation and fruits of their labor that transforms seedlings into lush and thriving plants.

Like all of the readers of *Neighbors* I drive past the garden plots that are located next to Route 195, north of Mansfield Supply. I always knew of the opportunity to rent a space at the reasonable price of \$25 per season for residents and \$35 for non-residents but I never spoke to anyone who tried it. The land is perfect for the amount of sun it receives and there is water available for watering the garden but what I did not know is who actually takes advantage of this great opportunity but I was about to find out. Being curious, I reached out to Jennifer Kaufman, the Natural Resources and Sustainability Coordinator for the town, and Jen connected me with Laurie Vega-Boulay, who rented one of the gardens for the season. Laurie hoped that this would not only provide fresh food for her family but also an opportunity to get through these challenging times.

When Laurie began this project, she thought she had enough knowledge to take on this project but she soon learned there was a lot to learn. Her dad, who was originally from Spain and moved to the United States, had lived on a farm and he brought years of insight and knowledge that could not be found in books. Laurie was sensible as she approached her task and began by asking her children what they wanted to eat. She thought this would be a great way for her children to not only help with the garden but also enjoy the many vegetables that it would provide. When Laurie told me this, when I visited her at her garden, she stopped, tilted her straw, garden shade-hat, back and said, “Yeah right” with a smile on her tanned face.

In her other life, Laurie teaches Spanish at RHAM High School. Laurie is a gentle soul that hovers over her plants like a mother hen. When showing me her garden she stopped abruptly, excused herself, and plucked two Monarch caterpillars off a parsley plant and gently placed them on a milkweed plant adjacent to her garden. I thought this was quite humorous since Monarch caterpillars use milkweed plants, almost like birds use a nest, as the caterpillar transforms into a butterfly.

Laurie, with her summer off, looks forward to her 6 to 8 hours a week that she spends in the solitude of her 20" x 30" garden of Eden. The garden is neat and well-kept with trodden pathways lining the rows of vegetables. Zucchini, tomatoes, bell peppers, romaine, lettuce and swiss chard are just few of vegetables that reign in her garden. Her attention to this wonderful creation provides more than just vegetables. Her dad, Manual Vega, often drops by unexpectedly and once, he was at the garden alone, surprising Laurie as she arrived to water. This father and daughter collaboration helped Laurie to not only increase her knowledge of gardening but as she shared, “I think my dad is proud of me not only because it is a sense of pride but it also carries on a family tradition of gardening and provide fresh, local produce for the family.

Starting a garden now is not practical since it is a little late in the season but you can start making plans for next year. Be on the look out for the annual Mansfield Community booklet that arrives in the spring or contact Jennifer Kaufman for more information at 860-429-3015, ext. 6204 or email her at jennifer.kaufman@mansfieldct.org If you want to visit the Community Gardens I am sure any of the gardeners would be glad to have you stop by and ask questions.

As I left Laurie's garden, she surprised me with a huge head of lettuce which later played hostess to the dressing I provided below. This month I shared two recipes since I know many would not have all of the ingredients that are required. If you are in search of some of the



Laurie Vega-Boulay in her garden. Dennis Pierce photo.

ingredients most grocery stores have them but you might also venture into the Asian market across from Aldi's in North Windham. They are very helpful and they offer a wide variety of unique offerings. To help you appreciate these selections in the first recipe, the term Muchim means to “coat / toss in sauce” in Korean. In the second, the carrot, ginger dressing is typically the one that is served in Japanese restaurants.

Korean Salad (Oi Muchim) Makes 2 servings

Ingredients:

1 cucumber, washed, leave skin on
2 green onions (scallions), sliced this on the diagonal
½ teaspoons of red chili powder
¼ teaspoon of sesame seeds
1 tablespoon of sugar
1 tablespoon of soy sauce
2 tablespoons of rice vinegar

Directions:

slice cucumber diagonally into 1/8-inch slices. Place in a bowl.

Mix soy sauce, vinegar and sugar in a bowl
Add mixture to sliced cucumbers

In a separate bowl add sesame seeds and then add chili powder a little at a time, mix with sesame seeds. By adding a little bit of chili powder at a time you can arrive at the degree of heat that you want.

Add some chopped onions and mix again. Retain a little bit to toss on top when serving.

Let sit at room temperature for 10 minutes, tossing occasionally

Serve....

You can keep in refrigerator and serve cold but it is best to serve immediately while it still has the crunch.

Carrot Dressing-Makes 2 servings

Ingredients:

1 inch of fresh ginger peeled
1 carrot
1/4 of an onion
black pepper, freshly ground, add to taste
1/4 teaspoon of Kosher or sea salt
1 ½ tablespoons of sugar
1 tablespoon of miso
1/4 cup of vegetable oil or canola oil
1/2 cup of rice vinegar
1 teaspoon of sesame oil

Directions:

Peel carrot and chop it into 1-inch pieces.

Peel ginger and slice into small pieces

Peel and slice onion

Place all in processor and add sugar, salt and pepper

Add sesame oil, rice vinegar and oil into processor

Process until smooth

Taste the dressing and adjust the salt. If it is too sour add more sugar.

If you want it thinner drizzle in a little bit of cold water.

But doing this will also dilute the taste.

Blend again. Pour into a bowl.

Serve over lettuce, fresh cucumber slices and tomatoes

And so, summer is upon us. Take the opportunity to visit one of the many local farmer's markets in the Quiet Corner. I believe each town now has their own. It has come a long way since in the 90's when the Storrs' Market was pretty much the only farmers market but also the largest. If you have a suggestion for a farm or a local grower or even a recipe that would feature a local ingredient, please let me know. I will do my best to share your suggestions in a future column. Drop me a line at Codfish53@Yahoo.com. Peas be with you...

“Mister- What Else You Do?”

By Bill Powers

Having changed careers to become a public school teacher, my very first job was with Hartford Public Schools in the North End of Hartford, Connecticut. I taught in a small program designed for students with behavioral and academic needs. Half of my students were African American and half were Latino. A major objective was to improve their literacy skills. In addition to reading, writing and mathematics skills, I included financial literacy. It was important not only to focus on understanding the basic life skills but also very important on being able to apply and practice them. Learning the basics of financial literacy was a great opportunity to do just that.

A way to have some fun while learning about investing money was to participate in the *Hartford Courant's* Stock Market Game. Since my students were 7th through 12th grade, two teams were formed. One was for grades 7-9 and the other was for grades 10-12. Furthermore, working in teams contributed to practicing important social skills.

Each team was given \$10,000 pretend money to use for investing in stocks that they selected with the ability to sell and buy on a weekly basis. The teams were provided periodic updates about profits and losses. Interestingly enough, teams from throughout the region were formed and participated in the contest.

My students decided to invest in companies that provided products or services with which they were familiar and would be in high demand based on their own experience. The kids were enthusiastically involved; and one day to my amazement, just before class began, a group of five students excitedly ran into my classroom holding the financial page of the *Hartford Courant*. They were led by Aquan, their team captain, who had highlighted each of their stocks and said, “Mister, we're doing good!” Week after week my two teams finished in the top of the regional rankings. Through all of this, my only regret was that I hadn't invested real money based on their intuition.

Together the teachers and students always looked forward to the competition in two traditional activities each year - the pool tournament and the student-faculty basketball game. Unbeknownst to my students and my colleagues I had good skills in both events that were never disclosed. Growing up from the age of 10, I had a friend and basketball teammate who had a gift for understanding the principles of physics and the ability to apply them to basketball and shooting pool. I learned from him, Larry Lisciotti. After high school, Larry became a successful professional pool player whose nickname was “The Prince of Pool.” In recent years I had rarely played pool but the principles are engraved in my brain. However, I had continued to play basketball. I was able to do very well in both activities to the astonishment of students and faculty alike. Aquan, who was the captain of his Stock Market Game team, had also participated in the pool tournament and basketball game.

Immediately after the basketball game, Aquan approached me and congratulated me. He said, “Mister you do stocks, you do pool, and you do basketball - what else you do?” Laughingly I asked him, “What else is there?” He responded, “I don't know right now, but I think I'm gonna find out!” I wish with all my heart that this was the end of the story.

Several months later in April of 1999, at five in the morning, a tearful social worker was on the phone. She wanted me to know before hearing about it on radio or television that a Black fourteen year old, Aquan, was dead - shot in the back by a white Hartford police officer. Early in the morning Aquan and three friends had fled from the officer who had responded to a call. The officer believed they were involved in a crime involving the use of a gun. Whenever I hear of similar episodes, unfortunately there are far too many, I think of Aquan with a smile and a tear. In addition to the sadness, there is anger.

After all these years, Aquan continues to matter to me.

Bill Powers lives in Windham, CT. and is a retired Licensed Professional Counselor and teacher in Hartford and Windham Public Schools.

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Unsung Heroes of Soul: O.V. Wright

By Dean Farrell

As host of “The Soul Express” on WECS, I play the biggest names in 1960s and ‘70s-era soul music. I also mix in the many great soul artists who did not make it big but were no less talented. This month’s column is about one such act: Overton Vertis “O.V.” Wright, whose gospel-inflected singing influenced the likes of Robert Cray and Taj Mahal.

He was born in Lenow, Tennessee, on October 9, 1939. At age 17, he joined a gospel group called the Sunset Travelers. Wright later sang lead with another gospel act, the Harmony Echoes. During this time, he met songwriter Roosevelt Jamison, who also managed soul singer James Carr. Jamison signed Wright as a Rhythm & Blues singer and arranged a recording contract with the Memphis-based Goldwax Records. Wright had one release on the label, 1964’s “That’s How Strong My Love Is,” later covered by both Otis Redding and the Rolling Stones.

After the single came out, it was learned that Wright was still signed with Peacock Records in Texas, for whom his gospel group had recorded. So label chief Don Robey placed Wright on Peacock’s Back Beat subsidiary. On that label, he first made the national R&B charts with 1965’s “You’re Gonna Make Me Cry.”

Two years later, O.V. Wright enjoyed his biggest R&B hit, “Eight Men, Four Women.” The ethereal ballad told of a man who “dreamed that love was a crime.” The title referred to the twelve jurors who “found me guilty of loving you.”

In the middle 1970s, Wright did time in prison for drug offenses. In 1977, he signed with Hi Records in Memphis, whose artist roster included Al Green, Rufus Thomas, Ann Peebles, and Otis Clay. Wright recorded five albums for Hi, none of which sold particularly well.

Despite occasional success with the national R&B audience, Wright’s recordings were always much bigger in the deep South. For example, his 1967 release, “Heartaches, Heartaches,” only reached #25 nationally but was a top five hit on WGOK in Mobile, Alabama.

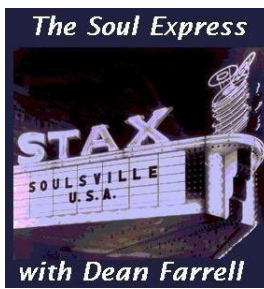


Following years of drug addiction, O.V. Wright, 41, died of a heart attack on November 16, 1980. His music was later sampled by a number of hip-hop artists. Ghostface Killah sampled “Motherless Child” on his 1996 “Ironman” album, the Wu-Tang Clan sampled “Let’s Straighten It Out” on their song “America,” and “Ace of Spades” turned up in “Recognize a Playa” by Slim Thug & The Boss Hogg Outlawz.

Charted singles:

- “You’re Gonna Make Me Cry” (1965) R&B #6, Pop #86
- “Eight Men, Four Women” (1967) R&B #4, Pop #80
- “Heartaches, Heartaches” (1967) R&B #25
- “What About You” (1967) R&B #46
- “Oh Baby Mine” (1968) R&B #36
- “I’ll Take Care of You” (1969) R&B #43
- “Love the Way You Love” (1970) R&B #48
- “Ace of Spades” (1970) R&B 11, Pop #54
- “When You Took Your Love From Me” (1971) R&B #21
- “A Nickel and a Nail” (1971) R&B #19
- “I’d Rather Be Blind, Crippled & Crazy” (1973) R&B #33
- “I’ve Been Searching” (1974) R&B #62
- “What More Can I Do (To Prove My Love to You)” (1975) R&B #82
- “Rhymes” (1976) R&B #87
- “Into Something (Can’t Shake Loose)” (1977) R&B #43
- “Precious, Precious” (1978) R&B #50
- “I Don’t Do Windows” (1978) R&B #91

Dean Farrell hosts “The Soul Express” on WECS, 90.1-FM, from 9:00 p.m. - midnight on Fridays. He plays vintage soul music of the 1960s and ‘70s—everything from #1 hits to long-lost obscurities. Dean archives his shows at <https://www.mixcloud.com/dean-fioral>. His e-mail address is soulexpress@gmail.com.



Thousands in eastern CT protest for social justice

By Carol Davidge

After George Floyd died at the hands of police, thousands of people across eastern Connecticut held peaceful vigils and marches to advocate for equality in social justice. In Willimantic, nearly 1,000 people attended two protests; in Pomfret 350 came to two vigils; in Woodstock, 500; in Danielson, 100. There were marches and protests in Ashford, Coventry, Mansfield and other towns. During some vigils, protesters knelt for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, the time that a policeman’s boot compressed Floyd’s neck while he pleaded to be allowed to breathe. Music, poetry and personal stories were part of many vigils. In Pomfret, a sign 30 feet long bore the names of 75 unarmed black people who have been killed by police. In Woodstock, not only did the students stand, kneel and speak, they raised more than \$700 for nonprofits including The Know Your Rights Camp, Lawyers Guild, NAACP-Willimantic, and Black Lives Matter.

The Woodstock vigil on June 14 was organized by Woodstock Academy students, led by Emily Ross. “I wanted this protest in order to give students, as well as the adults in this community, an opportunity stand against injustice. I recognize there are many barriers to attending larger

protests, and many students don’t have the funds to make any significant donations. In a primarily white and privileged section of the United States, as well as Connecticut, we have a responsibility to educate ourselves and create change here,” said Emily.



More than 500 protesters came to a Woodstock vigil organized by students. Photo by Jock McClellan.

Cedric Bilica from Eastford was among the Woodstock Academy students to share life experiences and advocate for change. “We need to continue fighting against police brutality but we also need to look at ourselves in the mirror. After all, every journey starts with one step. In this case, ending police brutality is that first step. However, it’s important to remember that the journey doesn’t end after the first step. It takes multiple steps, hardships, and small victories to keep us going. By peacefully protesting, despite our implicit bias and anger over the countless deaths of innocent black

people, we are a part of the solution. We will not quit after the first step. We will continue going, continue fighting peacefully, until we can confidently say, “for liberty and justice for all.”

Quiet Corner Shouts! organized two Pomfret vigils, on June 5 and 12. “We wanted to show our grief over George Floyd’s unnecessary death and for the hundreds of other people of color who have suffered the same fate at the hands of police in recent years. Our shared sentiment—support of Black Lives Matter, and support for equal justice and treatment -- showed that we are anxious for change,” said Cris Cadiz of Pomfret, Co-founder of Quiet Corner Shouts! and the creator of the 30 foot sign. Quiet Corner Shouts! is a grassroots organization in northeastern Connecticut that encourages civic engagement for education, health care for all, social justice, voting rights and environmental protection.

“These young people are in this for the long haul. They’re going to be the lawyers, politicians, activists and, yes, cops who know that their profession is also called ‘peace officer.’ We’ve been patient too long. I love and respect their impatience. It is infectious,” said Leslie Sweetnam of Woodstock, who attended protests in Willimantic, Pomfret and Woodstock.

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My Father Buys a Farm and How My Brother Learned He Could Fly

Before Covid-19 closed things down, Ashford Arts Council members offered a variety of arts workshops for both their members and community members during the past year. Marian Matthews offered a workshop in March called "Finding the Writer within You." All the writers who attended decided they wanted to continue and we have been meeting via Zoom ever since. Kathy Lepak has blossomed as a writer and we have encouraged her to submit her work to 'Neighbors.' We know you will enjoy her work as much as we do. Her artwork is also outstanding. MM

By Kathy Lepak

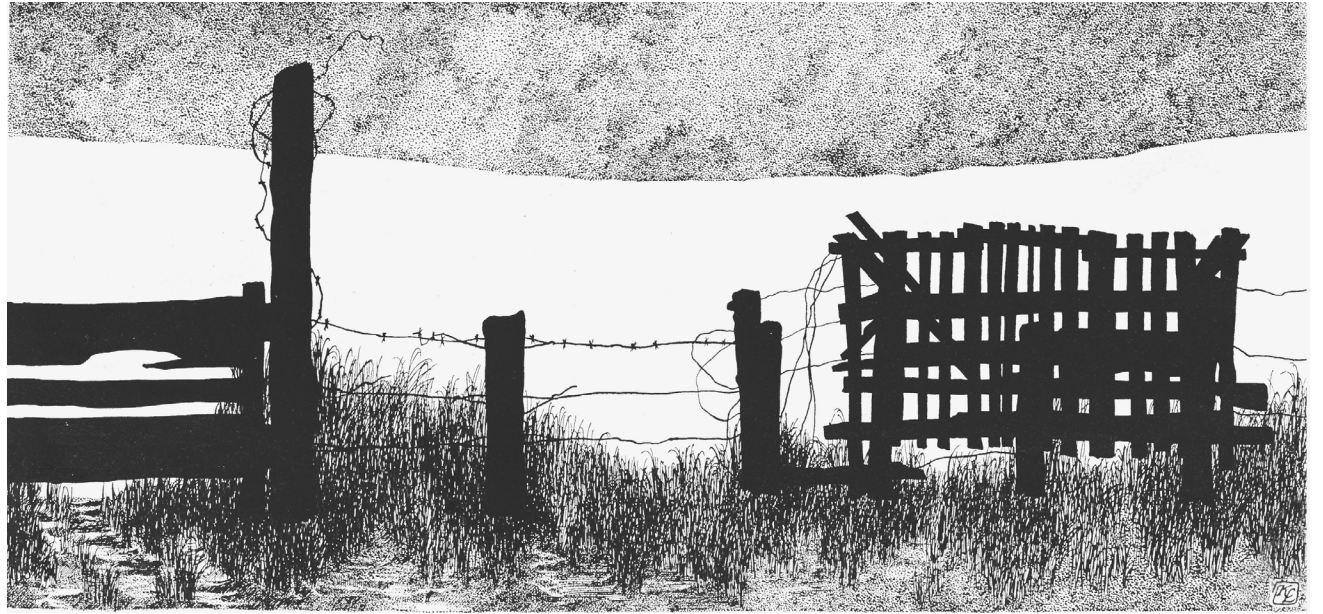
My father wanted to be a farmer. This came as a complete surprise to me; to all of us I think. We had lived in Manchester since I was three or four years old. Manchester touts itself as "The City of Village Charm." Back in the 50's and 60's that was probably true. As time marched on, as it must, the village had started to turn into an outstretched hand of the larger cities nearby. Chain supermarkets, McDonalds and Burger King restaurants; theater complexes causing the once majestic State Theatre on Main Street to close its doors and be taken over by an unknown church. Perhaps my father could see this and wanted to get back to his Irish roots - loving the land.

I had just returned from my one-semester fling as a college student, feeling quite the failure. I don't know if my parents thought so as well - they never really said very much about it. I was trying to find a new path. I knew that I wanted to do something that was artistic or creative, but those jobs were not readily available to someone with no college degree. Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford was Connecticut's largest employer at that time. I put in an application and after a short time was asked to come in to interview in a department that was responsible for making changes on the large Mylar drawings of specific parts of the jet engines. It was a job that I was very interested in and, as with many of the jobs in that company, you were paid throughout your time in training. I spoke to the supervisor in that department several times over the next couple of months. I think he hired me just to get me to stop annoying him. Over time, I became very proficient and would get the rewarding jobs of re-drawing entire portions of the engine.

Shortly after I returned home and found employment, Dad told us that we were moving to Coventry. I didn't even know where that was; out in the country somewhere. I didn't have my license at that time, much less a car to be able to drive the 20 miles to work. So I got into a car pool until I did get the license and purchased my first car - a cute little tan Volkswagen bug. I loved that car. My father, with his great sense of humor, adorned every part of that car with labels - steering wheel, shift, radio, brakes, and rear view mirror. It was hilarious.

My parents purchased the house, garage, barn and 14 acres from an elderly couple who had more than likely lived there most of their lives. Our address was simple - RFD 4, Box 2. It was a typical small farmhouse with a living room, dining room, bathroom and a large kitchen downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs. I shared a bedroom with my two younger sisters and the other bedroom was for my two brothers. My parents turned the dining room into their bedroom. Covered porches were located on both the front and the side of the house. There were seven of us. We could see immediately after moving in that this house was not used to being overburdened, as on the second day we were there the nonexistent septic system reared its ugly head and seeped its way back into the low ceilinged cellar. Fortunately, I suppose, there was an existing outhouse on the other side of the garage. This was used for the time that it took to install a new septic system. Even a one-seater outhouse was inadequate for the needs of seven people trying to get ready for their days of work or school. To say it was a struggle is an understatement.

It was a lovely property however. Set back about seventy-five feet from the road with a wide expanse of lawn from the road to the white stuccoed house. A beautiful large red barn set behind the house with stalls for animals and lofts on both upper levels for hay and storage. A gate to the left of the barn led to two pastures beyond, separated by a row of small trees and a stone wall. The opposite side of the house had an established raspberry patch as well as a large area of asparagus. I had always hated canned asparagus, but when I first tasted it fresh from the garden, I was hooked forever. Eventually, my dad had a huge patch of lawn plowed up in order to make a vegetable garden. We planted just about every vegetable that you could imagine. My mother spent hours in the kitchen in the late summer and early fall canning everything from tomatoes to string beans. She loved to garden and was always roaming about



My father's fields by Kathy Lepak

the yard in her bare feet. It was a rather idyllic setting.

My dad wanted to raise Black Angus beef cows. I thought perhaps I could make up for having troubled him to drive all the way to Kentucky to bring me home from school, so I went to the Aircraft credit union and applied for a loan. When it was time to speak to a manager at the bank, he asked why I wanted the loan. To a city person, I imagine that my answer "I want to buy a cow" might have been a bit of a surprise. But I was approved for the loan of two hundred dollars and very happily presented my father with the funds to purchase his first of many Black Angus. If I remember correctly, he ended up with three cows and one bull. I recall him coming into the house every morning after caring for the animals and asking my mother if he smelled like a cow. He had a full time job at a heat-treating shop and didn't want that farm smell to linger on his clothes. It didn't.

Oh that bull. Most of the time he was no great bother, but when his dander got up...best not to be in the same area. Once, when it was just my mother and me at home in the afternoon, my mom looked out the kitchen window and then turned to me and said "The bull is loose in the second field - we'll have to go out and get him." I turned and looked behind me, thinking to myself "Are you talking to me??" Well, yes, she was. You have to consider the fact that my mother was five feet and a smidge and probably weighed 90 pounds soaking wet. I was only an inch taller, although another twenty pounds heavier. That bull was bigger than five of us put together. Mom went into the barn and found a good length of rope, tying one end into a loop. With me tagging behind, she marched right up to that bull and slipped that loop around his neck. He didn't move a muscle. I was amazed. She then turned to me and said "Okay, now bring him back to the barn." Well, I found that you can put a rope around a bull's neck with no problem, but damn, don't ask him to move! I tugged a bit on that rope and the next thing I knew, I was flat on my belly being dragged around the field by a very angry, very fast bull. I don't know what I was thinking as my body was pulled over uneven ground at record speed, but in the distance I could hear my mother yelling "Kathy . . . let go of the rope!!" Why didn't I think of that? I am very lucky that he didn't drag me over any of the large rocks in the field. When I was finally able to stand, the entire front of my body was grass-stained and my hands red from hanging onto that rope. I was incredibly sore, but no broken bones. I don't think we got the bull back into the barn that day.

Then there was the day that my brother learned he could fly. The cows and the bull were generally kept in the first field behind the barn. The second field was for hay. It was a hill that led down to an area of wetlands in the back of the property. At the bottom of the hill, Tom had set up some bales of hay with targets on them for shooting practice with his 22. On this particular day as he approached the front field to get back to the house, the cows were all peacefully grazing and the bull was way off in the corner. I suppose Tom felt that going across slowly would be safe. As a side note, Tom took after my father and is not a large man, perhaps 5 foot 6 and a hundred twenty five pounds or so. He started across the field, rifle in hand as my father and I watched. He was walking very slowly. Then my father called out to him "Tom, look behind you!" He looked. As he turned back towards us, you could see his face turn white. The bull was staring directly at him with his head down and his hoof pawing at the ground, ready to make his run. Tom bolted, as did the bull . . . and the heavier of the two was gaining ground a lot more quickly. The front gate to the field was closed and locked. It was one of those gates that was anchored by a tall post on one

side with a chain that led to the top left of the gate, creating a perfect triangle . . . one that Tom very capably managed to fly over . . . one hand on the top of the gate, rifle in the other and the bull very nearly slamming into him! It was a move that should have made the evening news. The bull's front legs sank into the ground as my father yelled over to Tom . . . "Hey Tom, do you think you can do that again? Your mother missed it!"

Life on a farm is always exciting. Angus are not known for staying put. They broke loose one night and proceeded to walk down Route 31, which happens to be one of two main roads through town. It also happened to be about two o'clock in the morning. A woman driving drunk in a large station wagon, happened to meet those black animals in the black of the night and disaster struck. Literally. The crash woke the household. The station wagon was totaled. The driver was fine. Cows were running amok in Coventry. My cow was broad sided.

The police were notified. One of the local farmers who had helped us out before was called and came over with his flatbed to transport the injured cow to the barn. I can't recall how the bull and the other cows were actually rounded up. My cow was in pretty bad shape, but my father didn't want to bleed her. He wanted to wait until the next day to see if recovery was possible. I had to go to work. So I did.

I worried most of the morning and didn't get much done. I called home on my lunch break to see what was happening. My mother told me that the cow had died. I came back to my drafting board and cried, feeling rather silly for doing so. My friend asked what was wrong. "My cow died." Most city residents wouldn't understand that, but my friend had horses, so she felt the loss and grieved with me.

My boyfriend was home on a two week leave from the army. I called him and asked him what he was doing the next day.

"Why?" He answered.

"Well, would you be able to come out and help my father and brother bury a cow?"

He said yes, but told me much later what he was really thinking was "Oh, how romantic." How could you not appreciate a man who would do that for your father?

My Dad gave up the cows at that point and just concentrated on farming the land. He did have a few other animals after that - some sheep, some ducks - but eventually just concentrated on the gardening, which he was very good at. He loved riding around the property on his mower. Every time he did so, he would cut the lawn in a different pattern and the whole yard looked wonderful. The gate to the first field was removed and he turned that entire area into more lawn. I did a pen and ink drawing of part of that gate and the attached corncrib as a remembrance.

And my brother Tom . . . never had to worry about flying over a fence again.

To all our contributors-
Thank You!

Without your submissions of writing, poetry, artwork and photographs, this paper would not exist. T. King, Publisher

Mid-Year Is a Good Time to Fine-Tune Your Finances

By James Zahansky, AWMA®, Principal/Managing Partner & Chief Goal Strategist



Last month, we mainly discussed the benefits and differences of long-term and short-term planning, strategies, and goals. As we transition into July, we want to bring awareness to the idea of checking your finances at the mid-year. Taking a close look at your finances may give you the foundation you need to begin moving forward. Mid-year is an ideal time to do so because the planning opportunities are potentially greater than if you waited until the end of the year.

Let's face it, the last six months have been a roller coaster. But it's finally time to look at those investment statements, assess the damage, and implement a strategy to move forward.

Renew Your Resolutions

It is important to review resolutions and goals built at the New Year. Some may be more personal – maybe getting to the gym, making time for yourself to focus on a hobby, or moving forward in your career – but others are often focused on our finances – creating and sticking to a budget, saving for retirement, or making a large purchase like a home or car. Mid-year is a good time to look back and see if you've made any progress towards those goals.

Consider your retirement goals: has a reduction of income or contributions to your 401(k) affected your goals? How did market performance impact your retirement fund? The COVID-19 pandemic seemingly came out of nowhere, and none of us were prepared for the amount of devastation it would cause – particularly to retirement accounts. This could potentially affect your time horizon for when you aimed to retire. Being 55 with the goal of retiring in 10 years is a lot different than being 25 and hoping to retire in 40 years. The more time you have before you retire, the better chance you have at making up for losses.

If you're still saving for retirement, look for ways to increase retirement plan contributions. For example, if you receive a pay increase this year, you could contribute a higher percentage of your salary to your employer-sponsored retirement plan, such as a 401(k), 403(b), or 457(b) plan. If you're age 50 or older, consider making catch-up contributions to your employer plan. For 2020, the contribution limit is \$19,500, or \$26,000 if you're eligible to make catch-up contributions. If you are close to retirement or already retired, take another look at your retirement income needs and whether your current investment and distribution strategy will provide enough income.

It is also important to review your investment goals, especially considering the toll COVID has taken on the markets. You may reconsider your risk tolerance based on the recent market volatility and overall performance of your investments. Just remember you only need to review your investments a few times a year. Monitoring doesn't always mean daily or weekly check-ins.

Finally, review your savings goals and check to make sure you are still on track with your budget. How has COVID affected your savings goals? If you had to reduce your savings goals, are you sticking to your new goals? Are you putting discretionary dollars toward retirement? These are important considerations when trying to achieve your financial life goals.

While it may be difficult to look at your finances during turbulent times, review financial statements and account balances to determine whether you need to make any changes to keep your financial plan on track. Also, talk with your financial advisor to see if your retirement sav-

ings, investments, or budget need any adjustments to keep you on track to meet your goals!

Take Another Look at Your Taxes

Completing a mid-year estimate of your tax liability may reveal planning opportunities. You can use last year's tax return as a basis, then factor in any anticipated adjustments to your income and deductions for this year. Check your withholding, especially if you owed taxes or received a large refund. Doing that now, rather than waiting until the end of the year, may help you avoid a big tax bill or having too much of your money tied up with Uncle Sam.

You can check your withholding by using the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator at irs.gov. If necessary, adjust the amount of federal or state income tax withheld from your paycheck by filing a new Form W-4 with your employer.

Also, there are some COVID-related tax implications you may want to consider for the 2020 tax year. If you took a distribution from your IRA because of an unexpected impact of COVID, consider how you will pay that back while maximizing tax efficiency. Consider the tax implications of a PPP loan and unemployment benefits. Unemployment benefits are considered taxable income. If you received unemployment benefits in 2020, did you have funds withheld or will you need to prepare to pay those taxes in April 2021?

For more information related to tax implications and the CARES Act, check out the CARES Act Q&A on our website, www.whzwealth.com/covid19-resources, and talk with your financial advisor and accountant! They can help you determine the best strategy and plan for preparing your 2020 taxes.

Bouncing Back

We have all had lots of changes occur in the last 3 months – from loss of income, and unemployment, to investment losses and the effects of overnight policy changes. Take some time to sit down and comb through your finances and consider making an appointment with your financial advisor and accountant. These are important planning aspects to consider every year, especially this year due to the pandemic.

Don't forget, mid-year check-ins extend beyond finances. Are you still working toward achieving other goals? Even if you didn't, there's always another chance! But remember, don't put off until tomorrow what you can achieve today.

Check out our Live Well – Feel Well resource page for fresh ideas to safely enjoy the summer months! And for more planning strategies, resources, and information, visit our website www.whzwealth.com/covid19-resources. If you are interested in financial advising, give us a call at 860-928-2341 or email us at info@whzwealth.com.

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Dear Reader-

Please consider contributing to Neighbors- Write an article about a person you admire or a local program you believe is important. Take a photo of a friend, loved one or pet. Write a poem or a piece of flash fiction. These pages would be full of press releases without submissions from local residents who care about each other and their community.

T. King, Publisher

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Racial injustice & garden bigotry

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

As issues of *Neighbors* ask:

“This is our time on earth.
What are we doing with it?”

I started writing a horticultural column with historical, now moralistic, context.

As pandemic alarm has morphed into racial protest in America, the moral question compels attention. After the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, maybe racial injustice will finally have its *Me Too* moment. The virus will eventually be countered by a vaccine (perhaps a year) but systemic racism has been in America for centuries.

RACISM My thoughts go back to May 1963. I was a Michigan high school junior when Joan Trumpauer Mulholland, five years older than I and a great-granddaughter of Mississippi slave owners, protested with Ann Moody and John Salter at a segregated Woolworth’s counter in Jackson, Mississippi. Smirking White men dumped sugar, water, vinegar, mustard and ketchup on their heads.



Woolworth counter protest in May, 1963. Contributed photo.

“They dumped all that sugar on my head as if I wasn’t sweet enough already,” she joked recently to columnist Renée Graham (June 7 Boston Globe).

I wasn’t paying attention. She had already participated in the 1961 Freedom Rides and spent two months in the state’s notorious Parchman Penitentiary. She’s still protesting, recently at a Black Lives Matter event where she lives in Virginia. I’m paying attention.

My thoughts go back to my 30 years in Minnesota at the top of the Mississippi River watershed where my horticultural interests were taking root, and to several years I answered 9-1-1 calls in Minneapolis, a prosperous, progressive city that nonetheless had poor neighborhoods of Blacks, Hispanics, Indians, Whites, and poor students as I.

We had murders, robberies and assaults. And some bad cops, as many places. But most were good cops with difficult jobs, taking high priority call after call for help from crime victims, the red calls that illuminated our phone banks, and were answered first. Yellow lights were the lower priority calls to a seven-digit phone number.

(As I understand, the “defunding issue” is more about reallocating funds for nonviolent social needs that many police would rather not go to anyway, as were many of the yellow calls).

WEEDS? So this month I consider the question of weeds, what is a weed, whether to kill a weed, what I consider garden bigotry. I am delighted by my glorious weeds, by the “inexhaustible inventiveness of nature,” as Pamela Jones says in her book ‘Just Weeds’ (1991). Their persistence is admirable. Their bold structure can be satisfying. And they have value.

Within the Hartford suburban region that extends

east to Storrs and Mansfield Hollow (and often copied across the cultural edge), many landscapes are contrived with conventional lawns and house foundations decorated with ornamental interest, with contrasts in color, texture and scale, and all-season-interest (what I’m often asked to design). A Victorian-like sensibility delights some with shocking incongruities.

Suburban style also treasures tidiness and weed-less order -- as did my dear departed mother Ingrid who also taught me to respect others, regardless of differences. The Golden Rule doesn’t apply to garden landscapes. Weeds are not welcome. This is not right or wrong, but a question of style. Weed extermination is needed by farmers and agriculture, but cancer-causing chemicals have been successfully marketed to homeowners and their lawns.

Defining a weed, however, is a garden judgment to arbitrarily kill an unwanted plant and it reminds me of systemic racism. Like the grim condition of “the colored school” that struck Joan Mulholland when she was 10: “I took one look at this and knew it was so wrong.”

I’m beyond that suburban edge in rural Chaplin, in farm and state park country, but my yard does have a cultural edge. Public view along the 1750 house front honors the past, mostly unchanged with nonnative **daylilies**

(**Hemerocallis**, an Asian import). But the sideyard spaces over to the back patio are contrived as above. Except weeds.

Small “weed grasses” appear here and there as 6-inch clumps in spring with grain-flower heads shooting up nearly two feet by summer. I’ve interplanted several small ornamental grasses, a dwarf **Deschampsia ‘Northern Lights’**, a **blue fescue (Festuca ‘Beyond Blue’)** and a grass-like **sedge (Carex ‘Evergold’)**. On the other hand, my five-foot **Miscanthus ‘Morning Light’** grass commands the space of a medium shrub by June, with narrow, white-striped arching blades.

Mullein (Verbascum) is native to Europe, Africa and Asia, and was imported in the early 18th century for traditional medicine uses. Leaves were smoked to treat lung ailments, and mullein was even thought to ward off evil spirits. A large rosette of fuzzy, silver-green leaves produces a dense spike of small yellow flowers on a 5-foot stem in the second year. It is biennial, flowering the second year, producing hundreds of capsules, each with 700+ seeds, then it dies. Not perennial. Flowering progresses upward, each opening before dawn and closing in the afternoon. There are garden cultivars but I quite like this native species considered a weed, for its bold stature that some think is coarse.

THICKETS The backyard thicket has evolved over the last two centuries, and blends into the forest where I just planted five **American Beech (Fagus)** that are native but disappeared from my woods. In winter, when the woods are mostly bare branches, the beech retain their tan leaves, pinkish in late day sun.

My backyard thickets are not all native, however. Nonnative -- termed ‘exotic’ -- are **Lilac (Syringa)** and

Forsythia, front yard plantings for a larger long-gone 1800s house (perhaps lost in a fire) that was built behind my original 1750 farmhouse closer to the road. Once contrived, they’ve matured to a thicket, part of the wilder landscape.

Native versus nonnative relates to the weed issue. Some purists want to eradicate plants that are not originally native, but are certainly here for good. **Burning Bush (Euonymus alatus)**, AKA Winged Euonymus for the corky ridges along the branches) is an exotic shrub with bright red fall color (a pleasant pink in the shade) that can grow into a small tree. Some claim it is toxic, but as with many plants -- such as **yews (Taxus)** -- you have to ingest a lot to suffer anything.

Staghorn Sumac (Rhus typhina) is native to the northeast, midwest and the Appalachians, and is widely cultivated as an ornamental throughout the temperate world. The compound leaves look tropical; they also have red fall color. Although a native woody plant, some consider it a weed because it adapts so well to dry roadsides and other barren spaces. Its fuzzy red fruit (technically a drupe) is also attractive, resembling a staghorn, and Native Americans used it to flavor a lemonade-like drink.

Many rose family shrubs are armed with thorns, spines or prickles to discourage herbivores. The genus **Rubus** (blackberry, raspberry) has arching tangled branches, and tasty fruit. The most striking example of an exotic gene wild is multiflora rose:

Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora) AKA Japanese Rose) A native Asian rose that has invaded North America, it also has edible and medicinal uses. Other rose species are similar, some superior, but Multiflora is the most prolific rose due to invasiveness. It was introduced as a “living fence” for erosion control, and promoted as shelter and food with fleshy “rose hips” for wildlife. Good rose. Multiflora grows 10 feet tall and wide, an impenetrable mound of arching stems with cascades of fragrant flowers, charming small white petals with yellow centers. My bunnies like



Young edible leaves of Multiflora Rose. Contributed photo.

it; the dense thickets keep the fox out. Birds can avoid the hawks. Good rose.

Very aggressive, it can crowd the introduced native grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees that are professionally designed to enhance wildlife habitat. When the tips of the stems touch the ground, they root to form a new crown. Thick thickets that crowd native plants make it a noxious weed and an environmental pariah. If near trees, the rose behaves like a vine, climbing 20 feet. Thorns are nasty! Bad rose.

Culinary Use (mid 17th century origin from Latin *culinaris*, from *culina* ‘kitchen.’)

Roses have edible berries called rose hips. Multiflora hips are small but plentiful. They can be eaten raw, but hot or cold tea is a popular way to enjoy their unique flavor. To make rose hips tea, mash berries and steep in hot water. Good rose.

Harvest after first frost when hips become soft and sweet, or keep on until soft (colder weather preserves them, but hips may rot in mild winters). Edible seeds are steeped as tea. Raw leaves and flower petals are edible. Leaves should be harvested when young, before developing thorns underneath, and might appear all season into early winter.

Nutritional Benefit Rose hips and leaves are rich in vitamin C, carotene and essential fatty acids. The seeds are ground as a vitamin E supplement. Roses may reduce cancer, keep tuned.

MORAL of the story is to coexist. Love your neighbor. Love your weeds.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Master gardener/designer, Chaplin



Judy Buell (left) and Emilie Hebert.

Contributed photo.

Buck's Reaches Out to Help Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp

Submitted by Elaine Nelson

Some businesses become iconic over time, others are born that way. One of the latter is Buck's Soft Serve, LLC. Friends Judy Buell and Emilie Hebert and their families opened the serving windows to the public on May 25, 2018 and the rest is history. It is tucked away in a tiny corner of Woodstock Valley, on the farm originally owned by Harvey Buck, grandfather to Judy's husband Ben. In pre Covid times, visits to the goat pen, bunny cages, and chicken coops, playing corn hole and hula hoops by the tables under the shade tree made it a wonderful family destination. They offer 52 hand mixed individual flavors and their famous Nor'Easter's and sundaes, with hard dips, candies and sauces galore, all at a reasonable prices. The loyalty of their fans was demonstrated in October of 2019, when a Planning and Zoning meeting in Woodstock to discuss the permit they had been issued to be held at the Bates Auditorium at Woodstock Academy in order to hold all those who wanted to attend to support them.

Like all businesses, Buck's had to adapt to the constraints necessary to control exposure to the virus for their customers and staff this year. They switched to a curbside service that maximizes every inch of space in the former parking area. As you pull up to the ordering tent, you get a chance to see the goats, you place your order and a car hop brings it to your car window. A quick exit is required to keep the traffic flowing.

Both Judy and Emilie were 4-H club members and attended camp when they were kids. Emilie was born and raised on a dairy farm and went to camp throughout her childhood, "making memories and friends that I cherish to this day". She has been leading cow camp since 2016 and also does Farm Camp. Judy and her children also grew up as 4-Hers and attended camp. Judy became a club leader and also served on the advisory group to the Windham County 4-H Fair Board, working with kids in all aspects of running the fair. Judy said "the friendships I formed and skills I learned from my 4-H experiences are life long".

Despite the temporary change to their business model, they were concerned enough about the virus induced problems the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp was experiencing, that they set up a donation bucket at their check out and on their website. Camp Director Heather Logee and some of her administrative staff have also been on site on the week-ends to sell water to customers and help with

traffic management. Since the beginning of May, over \$4,500 has been raised at Buck's for the 4-H Camp! We cannot thank them enough for reaching out to help us as we struggle with the financial shortfalls caused by this year of no in- person camps.

Our Neighbor's Apiary



My bees are hard at work making honey. The sealed cells in the top of the photo are capped honey. The bees are using their wings to evaporate the water, which thickens and concentrates the honey. When it is less than 18% water, the bees cap the cell with wax. Photo and caption by- Pete Polomski, Buddha's Bees Apiary, Chaplin CT



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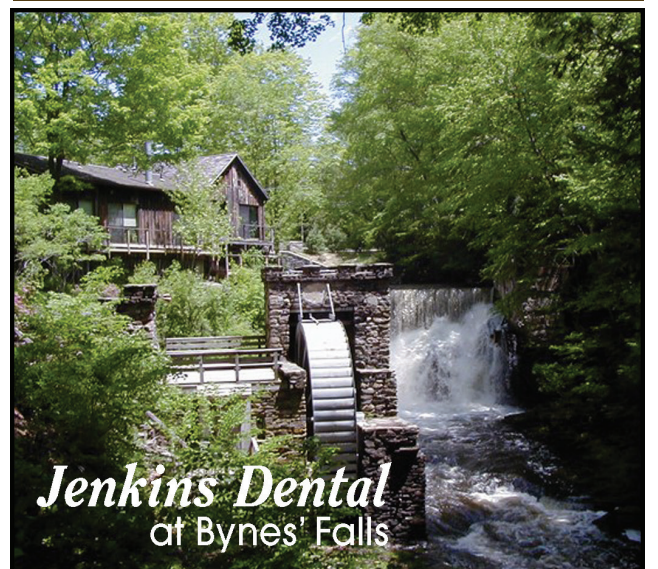
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A Saturday Morning in May

By Dan McGinley

Our two greyhounds suddenly went still and silent on our trail hike this morning and this never happens, so I started checking the woods for anything out of the ordinary, while the little Jack Russell lowered her head - a low growl starting - and I'm thinking maybe a black bear was in our neck of the woods again, or one of those chicken-stealing bobcats.

When my old friend finally appeared it was like a vaporous apparition from a stand of birch, then through a large patch of fern without any sound as the dogs remained in place, and the Jack stopped growling. He's like Ace Ventura or Snow White with an edge. I've seen him call black cap chickadees to his shoulder with that sporadic warning hiss they use for hawks. This guy doesn't have a singular skill set, he has an encyclopedic repertoire beyond anything you will ever find in a traditional learning environment.

I have known him since 1981, and have always referred to him as "The Cambodian" because his name is not only difficult to spell, but something he never likes to reveal. I mentioned him a few times while working at The University of Rhode Island, studying the ruins of Angkor Wat with the children of refugees who had escaped a Khmer Rouge massacre between Kampa du and the Tonle San River. The Cambodian was hunting three K.R. soldiers when he discovered a small village under attack, and moved to save them. Twenty years later their children were in Rhode Island, applying for college classes and smoking clove cigarettes on the quad. The Cambodian introduced us, and I had some very good study partners.

Such is life, and such are the ways of this small and powerful man who somehow decided I was worth his friendship, while I slowly struggle toward his stratospheric standards and always fall far short. Very short. Nobody can ever live up to his standards, but it's an honor to witness them in action.

He is very old now, but still moves quick and sure, quiet and observant. We hiked up past an old rotting still and moved west toward the legal, functioning one

on Chatey, past a massive wolf tree and beneath an old deer stand. The Cambodian took two of the dog leashes as we talked, catching up on old times.

"You found peace," he told me. "You wear the hat of a hillbilly."

I never wear a hat, but I got his meaning.

We stopped near a fallen oak and took seats on the trunk. He had already figured out that the greyhounds could not be untethered, but the little Jack Russell was free to wonder, and the old beagle was home on the couch, dreaming of old, slow rabbits.

"My wife has passed away," he said suddenly, looking off into the woods. "She had a condition that grew and grew from the Agent Orange, as it destroyed her spine."

We were quiet for a while, and he stared at the ground for a long time. I've never seen him like this, and didn't know how to respond, because you never tell this man you are sorry, you never show him any kind of sympathy, but you also have to be truthful.

"They bombed our farm," he said softly, reminding me of history I already knew. "Then they sprayed."

"I don't have words for this," I said. "I don't even know where to begin."

He simply nodded, staring into the woods. "There are no words. People from all sides have suffered."

But his wife . . . They brought seven kids over here after Vietnam fell, and the Khmer Rouge took Cambodia. Seven kids under cover of darkness from a once-thriving farm blown to hell when Nixon lied on television and ordered bombs dropped on a neutral nation. Where do you even begin with that? I've been through the ringer myself, in hospitals seventeen times - two of those fighting for my life - but my Cambodian friends are superhuman to me. They make my struggles seem almost comical. Not that it's a contest, but when you think things are really getting bad, you can always find company, and sometimes they will put you to shame.

One night over twenty years ago, we met in Boston's Chinatown, and it was a fast education in the cultures and sub-cultures within our society, watching elite

Kung Fu classes, eating dinner in a Pagoda-shaped restaurant where an ancient man sat at a massive corner table, with people constantly coming by to sit for a few minutes, passing envelopes under the table. We ended the night and early morning in a club where a young Vietnamese woman sang with a voice that could make you cry, even without understanding her words.

Everywhere we went I would catch people nodding to my friend, some quickly bowing with their palms together. Some people were very animated in their greeting, and by morning we had seven Cambodians with us, watching the sun rise over Boston Harbor, near the Mystic River.

Now we sat deep in the woods and talked, reconnecting after many years and catching-up on things, though he would know a lot about me in a way that would creep some people out, unless you understood the madness of his life.

He would have sent someone to Town Hall for sure, or through the internet to check land deeds surrounding our property. He would know who owned the piece of land we were on right then, and some of their family history. He could tell you the players in town, and he could tell you things about Windham County that people never guessed. He would know where I worked, my family status, and what kind of car I drove. He would know all of these things, but only reveal a little of that, depending on his level of trust.

The first thing he dropped on me was, "You wrote some mean things about this town, in the little paper."

"I was going through a rough spell there."

"You were trying to be funny in a snarky South Boston way, but it fell short and was mean."

"A woman kicked me in the leg at Sneakers; told me to write an apology."

He almost smiled. "She was correct, but you never apologized."

"The people who know me know I love this area. They see me picking up trash, they saw me help coach basketball, help with the girl scouts. The others probably forgot or no longer care. Some actually laughed."

He shook his head and watched

Camille digging a hole. "That company let you go during the recession. I think you were bitter for a while."

"It was my career, and I loved it." "Mapping wetlands, yes? Wildlife census, testing underground monitoring wells?"

"I loved every minute of it." "And now you live out in the woods, work in the old mill town."

"Work in the old mill town."

"And you are happy, peaceful, your child no longer a child, a prolific poet going off to school, your wife the biologist, working in a lab. Dogs and animals, now starting an orchard I see."

"Bravo," I said, suddenly angry. "You've officially creeped me out."

He shook his head then; a mad little gesture that was part anger, part awareness of what he had done.

"Point is taken."

He looked off, thinking . . . then said softly, "My wife has passed," and he nodded once, twice. "I have nothing but old, strange habits, but healthy children, all happy and scattered to the winds. I have a home here and in Vietnam, maybe you can come when you see Angkor Wat, when your child is gone."

"You don't have a home in Cambodia?"

"Too many enemies. Too many dead friends. Bad memories . . ."

"I get it."

"Maybe your child can come."

"You never know."

"You never know."

He handed me the leashes and disappeared back down the trail.

Some crows came by and started to caw at us, and I realized he had been gone for over a half hour.

I may never see him again, but I hope he just calls next time before coming by. I hope he feels safer in this dangerous, unpredictable world.

Our Community Calendar

Compiled By Dagmar Noll

July 1, Wednesday

Parade: Community Spirit Car Parade, 11:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. Decorate your car in red, white & blue and spread cheer to residents of Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation and Juniper Hill Village. Wear masks and stay in your vehicles through the duration of the parade. Line up at the vacant church at the intersection of Rts 275 and 32. Register by 6/30 at 860-487-9877 dabkowskij@mansfieldct.org

July 3, Friday

Community Awards: CommUNITY/ComUNIDAD Awards, 6:00p.m. - 7:30p.m. Honor local community leaders and businesses selected by Grow Windham. Celebrate with us on ZOOM !<https://zoom.us/j/95408370841> or call in 1-646-876-9923

July 4, Saturday

Community Food: Willimantic Farmer's Market, 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. Produce, plants, maple syrup, and herbal products. Please wear masks and social distance. Jillson Square, Willimantic. Info: willimanticfarmersmarket.org

July 5, Sunday

Community Food: Ashford Farmer's Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. Seasonal produce, fruits, cheese, meat, syrups, honey, baked goods. Please wear masks and practice social distancing. Pompey Hollow, Rt 44 across the street from Town Hall. Info: Loretta, birdeye123@charter.net
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation (Online), 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. Non-sectarian, Buddhist-style sitting meditation, teaching and sharing. Info: 860-450-1464 dmangum617@gmail.com

July 8, Wednesday

Skill Share: Learn to Make Herbal Vinegars, 4:00p.m. - 5:30p.m. \$15. Hands-on class. Learn to make a white wine mixed herbal vinegar and a spiced apple cider vinegar. CLiCK, 41 Club Rd, Willimantic. Register: 860-786-7907 or Clickwillimantic.com

Wellness: Buti Yoga in the Orchard, 6:00pm-7:00pm. Donation. Dynamic practice combining asana, primal movements, cardio, plyometrics, tribal dance, and deep abdominal toning. CLiCK, 41 Club Rd, Willimantic. Register: 860-786-7907 or Clickwillimantic.com

July 11, Saturday

Outdoor Market: By the Pond Market, 8:00a.m. - 2:00p.m. 187 Rt 66 East, Columbia. Ars & Crafts, small business and misc. flea market. Please wear a mask and social distance.

Community Food: Willimantic Farmer's Market, 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. (See 7/4).

July 12, Sunday

Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation (Online), 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 7/5)

July 18, Saturday

Outdoor Market: By the Pond Market, 8:00a.m. - 2:00p.m. (See 7/11)

Community Food: Willimantic Farmer's Market, 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. (See 7/4).

July 19, Sunday

Community Food: Ashford Farmer's Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. (See 7/5)

Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation (Online), 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 7/5)

July 25, Saturday

Outdoor Market: By the Pond Market, 8:00a.m. - 2:00p.m. (See 7/11)

Community Food: Willimantic Farmer's Market, 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. (See 7/4).

July 26, Sunday

Community Food: Ashford Farmer's Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. (See 7/5)

Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation (Online), 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 7/5)

July 28, Tuesday

Live Music: Nightshift, Willington Summer Concert Series, 6:30p.m. - 8:30p.m. BYO blanket, picnic basket, and lawn chairs to River Road AthleticComplex, 511 River Rd, Willington.

July 30, Thursday

Meditation: Leaf Jumpers, KPRD Summer Concert (Social Distance in the Park), 6:00p.m. - 8:00p.m. Free. 185 Broad St, Danielson.

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Little White Lies

By Donna Dufresne



It's true that America has a sordid past in its dance with racism which is carefully selected in the stories we tell. It's no wonder that so many of us in white America are oblivious to the everyday systemic and overt racism that African Americans and black and brown people wade through most of their lives. Americans tend to not know so much about history because – well let's face it – history was always taught from the perspective of HIS STORY, those white, waspish males whose ancestors fought in the Revolutionary War and became our heroes. We didn't know that most of them owned slaves, and we would not have cared because slavery had no relevance in our lily white lives. If you were female, Native American, the child of immigrants, or a Muslim, your story was never told in the history books until quite recently. Like many of the untold stories of the past, racism was so neatly packaged that we grew up believing in the little white lie that it no longer existed. These little white lies, seemingly so benign and meant to protect our innocent minds from the awful truth, had us believing that in America everyone is equal and has an equal opportunity to obtain success with a little gumption and pulling up on those boot straps. Those little white lies had us believing that slavery and racism was something of the long ago past and even then it couldn't have been all that bad, right? Movies and books engraved our brains with images of an antebellum South where slavery was a benign system of indentured servants who somehow enjoyed their captivity. Of course the word "captives" was never mentioned.

Unless you were raised in Texas or Georgia, whose text books glossed over or omitted African American history altogether, you probably learned about slavery and the underground railroad in elementary school. In high school you may have had a social studies class that whizzed through the Jim Crow and the Civil Rights eras. In the sixties and seventies you may have had a daring lefty teacher who did the Blue Eye/Brown Eye experiment in your class. But most likely the narratives in your textbooks were the Walt Disney version of American history. The fast-food drive-through version lacking the nutrition required to sustain democracy. By omitting the full story and not including the mistakes of the past Americans have been robbed of truth and anesthetized by those Little White Lies.

The Civil War (or the War of Northern Aggression if you grew up in the South), became white-washed in text books with an emphasis on "States Rights". In fact, it was the pustule on the sore of division in a fledgling democracy. The war was the symptom of a gap the size of the Grand Canyon over slavery which had deeply divided America. Especially in the North. We believed the little white lie that Northerners wanted to end slavery and the South did not with those woodcut images of slave owners, whip in hand etched in our brains. Needless to say, it was much more complicated than that. The economy of the North – the cotton mills, the banks, the shipping industry, and our fine universities – were complicit in the institution of slavery. After all very few business men from the 1830's up to the Civil War would have tolerated an immediate emancipation as the radical abolitionists called for. Even Prudence Crandall, who opened an academy for African American girls in Canterbury, Connecticut in 1832, had two brothers who frowned upon her abolitionist leanings. Hezekiah owned at least two cotton factories and Reuben had his own conservative bend toward gradualism. The argument for gradual change was another little white lie embedded with our complicity which still haunts progressive movements. Northern complicity helped to establish institutional racism from slavery, through the Jim Crow era and up to the present. Yet we continue to read the past and the present through our snow blind lens oblivious to the fact that racism still exists.

And why should we care about those Little White Lies? Much of white America believes that racism has the face of a hooded white Southern terrorist wielding their confederate flag, a symbol of terrorism to many African Americans. Because we have been led to believe that racism no longer exists or it's a Southern thing, people think we are making this stuff up, and black and brown communities are over reactive. Yet it eats away at the American psyche. Many white Americans, especially those of us in the middle and more privileged classes go out of our way to ensure others that we are not racist. But even those who are overtly racist will tell you "I haven't got a racist bone in my body", even though their behavior and the things they post in social media tell you otherwise. It is not helpful to have our white brothers and sisters hyper-focusing on convincing each other that they are not racist. What we

really need is for everyone to use their voice and privilege to stop systemic racism now. And while taking that most frightful leap of faith, we (meaning the white community) need to continue on an introspective journey in which we examine how racism has impacted our own lives, how we have benefited by it, and how we have been hurt by the institutions that perpetuate a segregated society. This is what it means to be an ANTI-RACIST as opposed to a NON-RACIST. It's a difficult journey. There may be anger. There may be tears and guilt. But guilt will not save the world. We cannot afford to become anesthetized and fall back into inaction. What's most important is that we do not expect people in the black and brown community to solve our problems for us or guide us on our journey. They have enough on their plate.

While doing the personal work, it's important to stop making excuses for racist behavior and systemic racism. First of all, acknowledge that racism is real and though we may hate to admit it, we are culpable for our blindness, silence and complacency. It's not those other white people who are at fault – the few bad apple cops – those white supremacists. It's all of us. If you don't see color, you are part of the problem; if you don't have a racist bone in your body, you are part of the problem. If you bristle at the idea of white privilege because you were raised poor and think you understand, you are part of the problem.

There are many good and decent human beings who think of themselves as non-racists and who would never dream of participating in some of the overt racist behavior we are witnessing on social media. The most hostile reactions to the protests against police brutality have been spun by racist elements of the Trump administration in order to woo their base away from the very difficult conversation we as a country need to have about race. The recent protests, the anger and the outrage against 400 years of oppression, and decades of not being heard as we knelt, prayed, sang, chanted and wrote letters seems to have reached a tipping point. We – meaning all the patriotic Americans, black, brown, white, rich, poor in the rainbow of diversity which represents the ideals of America, have had enough of little white lies. We can no longer be complacent about racism and the other little white lie about gradual change. Like those feisty abolitionists in the 19th century we are demanding structural change. It will be messy. There will be resistance. But this is America's challenge as we strive to live up to what the rest of the world dreams and hopes we really are.

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Lavish or Merciless?

By Adam Meikle

“Spend lavishly on the things you love,
cut costs mercilessly everywhere else.”
-Ramit Sethi

Elizabeth Warren promotes the 50/30/20 plan for budgeting: 50% of income on expenses, 30% on debts, 20% on wants. The 20% is the most important part because you buy whatever you want with it, not what you need. Whether that plan works for you is dependent on whether your needs fit in the other buckets, but you could adjust the numbers. The point is to budget for spending in a way that others might consider wasteful because what you want is unique to you.

Here are a few examples.

Cars are important to many people, not merely as a device to get from point A to point B. The brands speak to our social status and values, the amenities provide comfort, the appearance of the car in our driveway can in itself be our own personal work of art.

Most people can afford a car they like. Even the more expensive brands have options.

In fact, the more luxurious the brand, the more likely you are to find bargains in one or more ways. Prices on brands like Mercedes and BMW drop quickly as the car ages. DaveRamsey.com/blog/car-depreciation shows several brands that lose as much as 70-80% of their market value within five years. If you're a buyer, the price is probably right in one of those years. If you're really crazy about a very high end brand, it could double as an investment. Some sports cars hold value well, depreciating very little over time.

The market price of a car has very little to do with the actual cost of ownership. In fact the cost of ownership advertisements tend to assume very few miles driven and extended warranty ownership. When an advertisement says a car has the lowest cost of ownership in its class or compared to some other vehicle, it is likely the advertiser chose the purchase options that would make their vehicle seem to be the cheapest. If you don't fit that buyer profile then the cost of ownership claims might not be true, either in comparison to other cars, or in comparison to the most important number: what you have available in the budget. It is of little importance that a \$50,000.00 vehicle with an extended warranty and service plan, driven just a few thousand miles a year has low cost of ownership if you drive more miles, don't want to buy the warranty, and the vehicle has many expensive parts that wear out regularly.

The best practice is to find the actual cost of ownership (maintenance, gas, depreciation) on a vehicle with no options, at your expected usage level, and compare dollar for dollar to another vehicle, not relative to the price or as a percentage of a monthly payment. Once you drive the car away, it's yours, and the costs are in real dollars.

Love autos? Spend lavishly, but intelligently.

Don't pay for things you really don't care about.

Don't love autos? Cut costs mercilessly.

Buy a cheap car.

Buy a used car. Find the best deal based on the likely depreciation schedule. This is very easy to do. Just go to KBB.com and check the price on a few different model years with comparable mileage and condition and see when the model loses its value fastest.

Buy a popular car. Popular cars require a lot of repairs, and mechanics understand the cars well and used and new parts are plentiful.

Buy an American car. Don't pay shipping fees or tariffs or mechanic training fees for obscure imported vehicles.

If possible, find out what the typical repairs are and how much they cost. A small part may be very cheap, but if the entire engine needs to be taken out of the car to replace the part the repair will be expensive.

Buy much less than you can afford. Don't be underwater, don't pay a high interest rate, and don't fail to have cash available for repair or replacement. Your merciless cost cutting will come to a sad end when you find yourself with no car, no cash, and no available credit. You will have to take whatever deal you can get for a replacement.

What about groceries? Do you just love eating out or buying the very best foods and ingredients? Then do so. Or are you happy eating whatever is in the cabinet? Either way, take a few tips from the extreme couponing crowd. Whether you just want a good deal or you take great pleasure in pointing to a full grocery cart and saying “I paid \$10.00 for all that”, a deal is a deal.

Price book: Extreme couponers maintain a list

of grocery prices every week throughout the year. This is part of a complex strategy of matching low prices to coupon availability, but you don't need to be a couponing super-villain to benefit. Find the products you love and check the prices over time. If, for example, your favorite spaghetti sauce ranges from \$1.49 to \$1.99 over the course of a year, why not just buy more when it's \$1.49 and spend your cabinet space, rather than your cash on it?

Item combos and coupon stacking: Watch the circular and the little coupons that print out when you shop. At certain times of year coupons come out in combinations. For example, in November of past years, General Mills (GM) produced a manufacturers coupon for buy one/get one (BOGO) cereal. The following week, a store coupon allowed you to get a free gallon of milk with the purchase of four GM cereals. The very next week, GM cereals went on sale. Combining the sale, the BOGO, and the free milk coupon allowed a shopper to walk out of the store with four boxes of brand name cereal and a gallon of milk for just a couple of dollars. There was no limit to how often you could do this if you had the coupons, so you could get quite a few boxes of cereal and all the milk you could drink for a couple of weeks for just a few dollars.

Not for you? A lot of people really don't like extreme couponing and don't feel it gets them what they want. There's nothing wrong with buying what you want, exactly when you want it. How about doing it for charity? Find a great deal and put the food in the donation box by the front door of the supermarket.

Do you love vacations in the mountains or by the ocean? Want to get away whenever you want to your own secluded place? Then take up extreme couponing, buy a ten year old subcompact and save up for that second vacation home. Or are you just going to take a vacation every year and you want to keep costs down? A timeshare could be a good option.

Unfortunately the economics of timeshares are rather obtuse. With timeshare swapping agreements, property developer priorities, and add-on sales, the market value of a timeshare is subject to the property configuration, the owner's real estate portfolio, the current market price of things like cruises and hotel rooms, and the availability of substitutes in the time share swapping market.

As a buyer, you want to find a purchase price that works for you, and then on-going maintenance costs that are low.

It's almost impossible to determine the fair market price of a time share. The only reliable way is to compare the cost of a timeshare to the actual sales price of small houses or condominiums in the same area as a percentage. Do this for multiple locations. If the timeshare you are considering is, say, 3% of the price of a comparable condominium in the same area, but timeshares seem to be around 2% of a condominium in similar places, you might be paying too much.

On-going maintenance fees are also difficult to compare, considering the fee can often include amenities like year round use of a swimming pool, or room service. These amenities are not guaranteed, and your fees can change as the property owner's expenses change. You can't do anything about the real cost of maintenance or property taxes, but you can guess at the property owner's economics. Ask how many properties the management company owns. Look at the price of timeshares, occupancy rate, and maintenance fees at those properties. If the company owns several properties, and some are in less demand, you could be subsidizing maintenance at those properties through your fees.

Does your timeshare come with a swapping agreement? How many weeks can you get when you swap? This will also give you an idea of how much your timeshare is in demand or how many vacant slots are available in the network. If you're promised an excessive amount of swapping opportunities, it could mean properties aren't being sold, and you could be subsidizing those properties with your fees.

Finally, ask about renting out your timeshare. If a property is in demand, you ought to be able to cover your maintenance fees easily renting it out. In such case, the management company will be incentivized to list rentals for you or even rent the property for you. If renting is discouraged (renting can be discouraged for many good reasons), it could be because the developer needs to sell units, or has above-market fees.

None of these rules are hard and fast. Similar to a grocery store, a timeshare developer often has great deals to sell units fast or simply to promote their brand, and are purposely taking a loss. Use your common sense, and evaluate any timeshare offering in multiple ways. If it seems too good to be true, well, it actually might not be!

Happy spending!

Corona Virus

It's April of two thousand twenty.

We can no longer go where we choose.
Everything's closed, due to covid 19
So, we're stuck at home watching the news.
I venture out once a week now
(The cats and I do have to eat).
By reading and watching old movies
I manage to remain quite upbeat.
Each day I do one crossword puzzle
And each day I take a short walk.
I read mail and keep up with the laundry.
Then, get on the phone for a talk.
I've made muffins, and raked all the leaves.
I've sat down at the keyboard and played.
I've cleaned out the fridge and the cabinets.
Each day I make sure my bed's made.
The living room furniture's polished.
I've vacuumed all of the floors.
The birds have fresh seeds and suet.
I can't think of any more chores!
So, I'll sing with my ukulele
Or, I'll dance in my tap shoes, so chic.
Then, I'll sort all loose photos into albums
For that will take many a week.
Those of us who remain safe and healthy
Have little cause for upset.
The people sustaining society-
It's to them that we owe a great debt.
We can reach out via technology-
Each helping in his or her way,
Pulling together until this is over,
Then, thanking God for a new day.

Cheryl McClain, Willimantic

Tips to Spend Less on Cooling Your Home This Summer

(StatePoint) Keeping your home cool and comfortable on hot summer days doesn't need to cost a fortune. These tips can ensure your heating and cooling equipment lasts a long time and operates at maximum efficiency:

Clean and change filters: Dirty air filters can cause a system to suffer from pressure drop, which can lead to reduced air flow or “blow-out,” which can result in no air infiltration at all. When this occurs, your HVAC equipment is working harder, which means increased energy bills and ultimately, more wear and tear. To avoid costly repairs and replacements and enjoy lower utility bills, clean your air filters monthly.

As far as replacing air filters is concerned, one general guideline to follow is to change them every three months. However, the truth is that optimal frequency for this maintenance task depends on a variety of factors, including the type of filter in your HVAC unit, the size of your home, if anyone in your family has allergies and whether or not you have pets. No matter how often you change air filters, be sure they are properly-sized for your system.

The importance of cleaning and replacing air filters can't be overstated. Dirty air filters won't just cost you more money, they can compromise your home's indoor air quality and aggravate allergies and respiratory issues.

Get annual service: Your HVAC or furnace technician should service your unit annually in order to check that all its various components are in working order. A service check may actually detect a problem before you notice it, and catching it in time could extend your unit's life. Be sure to schedule this service before it's an emergency (i.e. don't wait until it's the hottest day of the year and your unit is in disrepair.)

Replace older units: Consider whether it's time to replace your unit, factoring in its age and regularity of service. Newer units, especially those with ENERGY STAR labels, operate more efficiently. Indeed, a properly sized and installed ENERGY STAR air conditioner uses up to 20 percent less electricity than older models. So, even if your heating or cooling system is properly maintained, you may be spending more money than is necessary each month.

Do it right: For ultimate savings, it's best to ensure your HVACR equipment is installed and serviced properly. The best way to ensure fast, efficient service done right the first time is by hiring a technician certified by North American Technician Excellence (NATE) for all installations, repairs and maintenance.

If reducing cooling costs, increasing home comfort and helping protect the environment are all important to you, there's good news, with proper HVACR installation and maintenance, these don't need to be competing priorities.

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

This month's topic is Air Conditioning and updated from an article I wrote more than a year ago.

This year marks 71 years and 4 generations of our family business. This being said, we have seen many or as I like to say riding the wave until the next one comes along. This month is a wave change in air conditioning in new cars being produced. The R134A Freon that replaced R12 is being replaced by R1234yf. The cost of this new Freon and the equipment to repair systems on new vehicles will again be more expensive. I'd like to share an air conditioning article I wrote in June of 2003 which begins in the next paragraph.

Well the weather is starting to warm up and it's the perfect time to talk about air conditioning. Car manufacturers have had to find an alternative Freon, something other than R12. R12 Freon has helped to deplete the ozone layer of the atmosphere. R134A has now become the Freon that is used in today's automobiles. The owners of R12 systems that are in need of service have two choices when it comes to Freon replacement. R134A can be retrofitted to an old R12 system or an alternative chemical can be used.

The main problem with old R12 systems is the age of the components. Metal and rubber fatigue can cause leaks or failures after systems are repaired. This happens because the system works under pressure. Bringing an old system up to specified pressures can overtax the old components and cause failure of the system. Some systems are better off not being repaired. This is a decision you will have to make.

The following are procedures that we feel should be taken in repairing or servicing an air conditioning system. The customer's complaint is that the air conditioner is not working. The first thing to check for would be the air conditioning compressor, is it engaging? If the answer is a No, then you check for all electrical fuses to be in working order. If the answer is yes, then the high and low service hoses are attached to the vehicle. This will tell the technician if there is pressure in the system, meaning there is still Freon present in your system. The gauges would show NO or LOW pressure in the system. We then try to identify what kind of Freon is in your system. R134A systems have larger service ports than R12 systems so they are easy to recognize. The biggest problem with R12 systems is the alternative chemicals that can be used or the worst scenario, R12 Freon that is cut with propane found to be present in the system. Remember that virgin R12 is very expensive and averages about \$40.00 per pound compared to R134A which averages about \$9.00 per pound. An average system runs on 2 to 3 pounds. The

Freon identifier machine tells the technician what type of Freon is in the system. Alternative chemicals cannot be recycled, but they do have to be reclaimed and disposed of by a chemical company. R12 and R134A can be recycled and reused. Bootleg R12 was being sold when virgin R12 prices started to sky rocket. This R12 was cut with propane which made it highly flammable. Luckily most of this R12 was sold in Florida and Texas. Once the type of Freon present has been identified, then it becomes clear what procedure will need to be followed, recycling or reclaiming. The vacuum pump is then turned on after the Freon is removed. This procedure removes moisture from the system and can also tell if a large leak is present. The vacuum gauge should reach 30 inches of vacuum and hold after vacuuming is done. If not, a dye is injected into the system. Air conditioning dye glows under a black light. The leak is found using the dye and the black light. If the gauge holds at 30 inches of vacuum for more than 30 minutes, the correct Freon can be added to the system with tracer dye. The vehicle is then started, the air conditioning is turned on and hopefully the compressor engages. If the compressor does engage, the pressure readings are correct and most importantly cold air is coming out of the air ducts, the car is then road tested and rechecked for leaks. Remember the system was low on Freon which means a leak was present. If no tracer dye is found then a future recheck is scheduled.

The next complaint is inadequate cold air. The technician uses roughly the same procedures as before, the difference is that pressure readings are present they just don't meet specifications. Gauge readings can tell the technician if a compressor is pumping correctly, if there is an obstruction in the system or if the system is just low on Freon. Freon does leak out of a system over the years so vacuuming and recharging a system is a very common service.

The air conditioning or comfort control systems of today entail more than what has been discussed here. Computer controlled systems have added a different twist to repairing a system. Air ducts controlled by servos can fail and the list goes on. Repairs could cost more than the vehicle's value. One thing we can be sure of is that future systems will be more complex as each vehicle manufacturer tries to improve upon their product. Lord, help us all.

I will wrap this article up with a few facts for you on the new R1234yf refrigerant. This new refrigerant is slowly being phased in. The phase in process began with some 2014 model year vehicles. The new refrigerant is patented and manufactured in a joint venture between Honeywell and DuPont-Chemours. There are others who are

also licensed to produce R1234yf. R1234yf has cooling properties that are similar to R134A which has been used since it was introduced back in 1994-1995 to replace R12. R134A contains no CFC's which are harmful to the ozone layer of the atmosphere, but it does retain heat well and has a high GWP (Global Warming Potential) rating of 1300. R1234yf has a GWP rating of 4 which is 350 times less than R134A. R134A is to be phased out of domestic car production by 2021. R134A will still be available to service older vehicles. Vehicles that use the new R1234yf refrigerant will require a slightly larger or more efficient condenser and a more robust leak resistant evaporator. R1234yf also requires a new type of compressor, PAG oil, and new certified recovery and recycling equipment designed especially for the new refrigerant. R1234yf is very expensive. A 10-pound container is selling for as much as \$650. It is also very unlikely that R134A systems will be able to be converted to R1234yf as the materials and lubrication issues make them not compatible. Many people have questioned whether this new refrigerant is flammable. After extensive testing it was determined that R1234yf has a low combustible rate at 2L. This means that it will slow burn, but it takes a lot of heat to ignite it. Almost every other fluid under the hood will light more easily and burn hotter than R1234yf, so the industry has determined that with proper AC system design, it does not increase the chances of a fire in a vehicle.

I hope this month's article has given you a little information on air conditioning. Remember to make sure that you understand the repairs that are being performed on your vehicle and if they will be the answer to your problem.

Happy Motoring,
Rick

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.

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Ashford resident and local solar expert, John Boiano has been in the Solar Industry for 7 years.

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The Story Arc and Outlining

By Felix F. Giordano

“The Story Arc and Outlining” is the structure upon which our stories are built. Some of you may wonder why we haven’t discussed the story plot, yet we’re talking about the story arc and outlining. I’ve decided that it is essential to utilize the concepts of the story arc and outlining before we develop our story’s plot. This is because when we develop our outline, our story’s plot can change right before our eyes and sometimes quite abruptly. We need to understand the substance of and how to apply the applications of the story arc and outlining in order to develop a clear and concise plot.

If we use the analogy of physiology, the story arc and outlining becomes the skeleton upon which we flesh out our story. Without a skeleton our bodies would simply be just a blob of cells on the floor with no definition or frame of reference. Our face could end up in the back of our body and our legs part of our amoeba-like torso. This is also true with our stories. A story with no structure or context will become a meandering jumble of words that will seem incoherent to the reader.

Our stories need characters and from them we develop a story arc. It may be that we have decided that our character needs to come of age, learn a lesson, or experience an epiphany. From the point where we introduce our character and his or her shortcomings or an obstacle they must overcome to where our character has become a new person or solved the problem, that is the story arc. Sometimes the story arc encompasses the devolving of the character where he or she is a worse person than when the story began. Whichever route you choose, there must be a story arc otherwise the story is incomplete.

A common story arc is Pat meets Chris, Pat falls in love with Chris, Pat and Chris get married. Another common story arc is Jamie is suspected of committing a crime, Drew must solve the crime, and Drew captures Jamie. Along the way you can develop countless situations that can lead to many different and interesting scenes in your story. In addition, your story arc can include surprise endings such as in scenario #1, Fran shows up, and Pat finds out that Chris and Fran are lovers, and in scenario #2, Drew exonerates Jamie.

In my novels, my protagonist Sheriff Jim Buchanan is always faced with solving a crime and bringing the perpetrator to justice. That is the obvious story arc in my books. Along the way, Jim learns things about himself, his Native American ways, and the wonderment of how close we are bonded to the spirit world.

There have been books written where the main character never resolves the problem or in the end, is the same person he or she was in the beginning. However, something else in the story arc will always show the reader that the main character’s behavior was never really the true story arc. In cases where the main character never evolved, it could be that bureaucracy, retribution, or reality was the real story arc. The horror, thriller, and science fiction genres often include story arcs which leave the characters helpless in the face of insurmountable odds. In fact, in many of those genres the characters never fare well. The ultimate story arc in those stories can be the universal lesson of leaving well enough alone or minding one’s own business.

So now that you have an idea of what the story arc is and how you can use it in your writing, let’s move on to outlining where the story arc will reside either subtly or overtly. Some writers claim they never outline, that they have the entire story right in their memory. The problem with that is that if they haven’t thought out all the events, situations and details that their characters will encounter, they could end up facing a writer’s block in the middle of their story. When that happens, at best it could stall a writer’s momentum and at worst it could discourage a writer from achieving his or her potential in their craft. That is why outlining is extremely important.

Let’s look at an example of an outline that I composed for my recent novel, *Missing in Montana*.

Part 1 - 1992

Sat/7/4/92 - Peta Ross meets Children of the Big Sky cult members Ruthie and Simon at their craft booth at the Old Fashioned 4th of July Festival in Troy Montana. Libby Mayor Robert Ross has a confrontation with Ruthie

Peta Ross leaves her family and goes back to the craft booth

A confrontation occurs between the Kootenai Tribe & Simon. Peta Ross trips on Tommy Broken Fingers’ walker

Peta Ross goes with Ruthie to her camper to make jewelry

Peta Ross slips into semiconscious from spiked lemonade

Simon and Ruthie break down the booth and leave with Peta Ross. Goyathlay meets Peta Ross and changes her name to Eden Child

Sun/7/5/92 – Sheriff Dan McCoy raids the cult’s compound and unable to find Peta Ross, brings Ruthie, Simon, and Yeshua Goyathlay in for questioning

Sheriff Dan McCoy speaks to Mayor Ross at the sheriff’s office

Ruthie’s interrogation

Simon’s interrogation

Sheriff Dan McCoy and Sheriff Shane Wallach speak

Yeshua Goyathlay’s interrogation

Wed/7/8/92 - Sheriff Dan McCoy and Montana Highway Patrolman Jim Buchanan meet

Fri/7/10/92 - Yeshua Goyathlay sees Eden Child (Peta Ross) in the cave and discusses with other cult members what to do with her

Tue/7/14/92 - Tommy Broken Fingers and his wife are murdered in Bonners Ferry Idaho

As you can see, this outline covers the first half of my novel. Each entry corresponds to one chapter in my book and each chapter is a separate scene. These entries are straightforward and none delve into specifics or details. They are brief glimpses, or summaries into what the scene is about. The specifics and details will come when the scenes are actually written. I also included with each entry for reference purposes, the day of the week and the date. Continuity is another reason why outlining is important. If your story is linear, you don’t want to end one chapter on a Friday and then two chapters later have that chapter occur on Tuesday of the same week. Outlining will help keep things in order and eliminate the need to back check dates and events.

The beauty of outlining is that say when writing chapter 7 you have an inspiration to take the plot in a different direction. You can easily modify the future entries in your outline so that the story remains coherent. It also helps if you want to go back and change something in your story. If you need to edit a scene, an outline allows you to clearly pinpoint where that scene is in your story so that you can access it in an instant.

Lastly, I want to discuss the spontaneity of writing and the perception that an outline and for that matter, your story is written in stone. As I mentioned before, you can modify both past and future entries in your outline. Outlining also allows you to pause in your writing when life’s common distractions occur and never forget where you left off. Even if you’ve stopped writing for a week or more, an outline allows you to review your story. It shows you where your story was and where it’s going. Think of an outline as a fluid mechanism. Change can happen when writing a story and it often occurs frequently. If you do have to change people, locations, events, or plots in your story, make sure that you change them in your outline both going forward and going backward.

We defined “The Story Arc and Outlining” as part of *The Elements of Writing*, and I hope I’ve piqued your interest in writing. Storytelling is inherent in us all. It is who we are as social human beings and we all have stories to tell.

Felix F. Giordano is a local author with books sales in excess of 6,000 and has had more than 3 million pages of his books read by Amazon Kindle Unlimited subscribers. Felix is also an organizer of the Eastern Connecticut Writers (ECW) at the Willington Public Library. To find out more about ECW, go to this link:

<https://easternconnecticutwriters.blogspot.com/>

Next Month’s Topic: The Plot and Sub Plots

Please thank and patronize our advertisers for making the Neighbors paper possible. Thank you. T. King, Publisher

A letter from a grateful ‘new’ neighbor

Howdy Neighbors,

Since moving here to the Quiet Corner in 2018 from Pennsylvania, we, the Fisher family, have been overwhelmed with gratitude for the community’s patronage and support for Organic Roots Farm. When we started selling our vegetables out of a shed on our farm a year ago, we didn’t anticipate getting to know so many of our neighbors so quickly. We are still working on remembering all of your names.

This year, we are again growing non-GMO, chemical free produce on about 3 acres of our farm. The list includes over 20 varieties of our heirloom tomatoes, zucchini, squash, green beans, peas, eggplants, several varieties of sweet and hot peppers, our “Incredible” sweet corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, cucumbers, pumpkins, and more.

We also planted a flower garden and are planning to sell fresh cut flowers and bouquets. And possibly, pick your own arrangement.

We welcome you to come to the farm to see the gardens where the food is grown, and to be entertained by the guinea hens and chickens. This year we have added another element of entertainment. We purchased a litter of heritage piglets. There were 8 in the litter, but because the runt was being picked on by the others, we separated her from her siblings. Our son Spencer has become quite attached to “Petunia”. She is now in a separate pen and she has become a family pet. Petunia loves to have her back scratched. Just don’t place your hands close to her mouth! Pigs will bite anything, including the hand that feeds them! As most of our regular customers know, last year my wife, Rosetta, started selling her homemade heritage wheat bread on Saturdays. Yummy! We hadn’t planned to remain open after the end of the growing season, but many of you insisted you “had to have” this bread all winter. So we have been open every Saturday selling bread, our non-GMO eggs, handmade soap, and other seasonal items.

We also enjoyed the Christmas open house that we did last December. We were thrilled to see many of you stop by for free homemade cookies and hot cocoa, wreaths made from greens off our farm, and even a visit from St. Nicholas and his wife. We hope that we can do it again this year.

We are changing our open hours a bit from last year. Starting July 2, we plan to be open Monday through Saturday from 11-5. Sunday we will be closed. We are easily accessible from Rt. 6. Approximately 1 mile on East Old Rt. 6. For directions from Rt. 6, follow the farm stand signs.

On Saturday, August 8, we plan to host a 1st year anniversary/ customer appreciation event. There will be prizes and giveaways. We are anticipating another great season, and look forward to seeing everyone soon, and meeting many more of you. Thank you again for a great first year. God bless you!

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Going Solar Locally

By John Boiano

My wife, daughter and I went solar in 2009, well before I made the decision to join the Solar Industry in 2013. I was a sales manager for SolarCity, the largest residential solar installer in the country. It was an exciting time, it was the early adopter stage of an emerging industry. Things moved fast, really fast. From national policy, to the incredible rebates that helped the masses go solar. It was at a scale that was never seen before. We helped a lot of people make great decisions to produce their own energy.

I've worked most of my career helping others. Before I started in the Solar Industry, I did a decade in the music industry as a sales manager and then I created a consulting company that helped school systems implement positive and compassionate communities. I facilitated positive school climate workshops and presented motivational talks at educational conferences and schools regionally and across the country. That came to an abrupt end when the Core Curriculum changed the way schools were mandated on how they spent their time and dollars. I was heart-broken. After 23 years of helping others with making positive societal change, what was I going to do now? Whatever it was, I knew two things: I couldn't sit at a desk and I still had to do something that would help humanity.

After a short amount of time, it dawned on me, solar! I figured, we have solar, it's done a lot of good for us financially, and emotionally I knew that we were doing a good-thing for the environment and humanity. Well, one job interview later, there I was working for the nation's largest solar installer, making another huge impact for the world!

As mentioned earlier, the industry grew fast. There were some great things that happened and there were some mistakes that were made. It was an incredible experience for me. I eventually resigned from the corporate run solar giant where I was beginning to feel that my personal worth carried little value. That's when I created the personal namesake for myself, ZenSolar, bringing my own identity to the industry as a solar professional.

I founded ZenSolar on the principals of being able to partner with companies that bring top tier products to

home and small businesses with transparency, high-integrity and exceptional customer satisfaction. The name is also a representation of how I strive to live my life. Some of us have different work lives than personal lives. I've worked hard to integrate both into a single seamless flow. The same care and compassion that I have for my personal relationships and the Earth translate into my daily business practices with my customers.

One of the many things I love about solar is that the benefits of solar pretty much sells itself. You're already on a payment plan for electricity. Solar allows you to take control of that plan at a lower rate than what your agreement is with the utility company. My goal is to help you decide if staying with the utility or going solar would best benefit your financial and personal lifestyle. Producing your own energy can be one of the most rewarding, empowering, and financially sound experiences of your homeownership life.

Knowing that every time I help someone go solar, I'm doing a good thing for my customer, for our community and for the world at large helps me confirm that I'm continuing to live my path of helping others.

Thank you for reading my story, it would be an honor to hear from you. Peace, John B.

Ed. note: John lives in Ashford.

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Performing Arts



Talent Showcase, Film, and Pizza – A Retrospective

By EC-CHAP

July

July is hot afternoons and sultry nights and mornings when its joy just to be alive. July is a picnic and a red canoe and a sunburned neck and a softball game and ice tinkling in a tall glass. July is a blind date with summer.

-Hal Borland

We just past the “longest day”, and summer is really here! As we get out and about, let’s not forget about the safe practices we have all engaged in. Great days ahead!

If you have missed our virtual Live Stream offerings in May and June, you can view “The Making of a Willington Mural: A Canvas of History & Social Change”, and the first in “EC-CHAP’s Spoken Word Series” on our YouTube channel at: (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCF7849dIweGDhNCQvAEa8wQ>).

In an effort to serve our communities, we will continue to provide a monthly live video streaming event. We would like to include local and regional artists to share in these events, and invite you to participate. All events are free to the public.

Participate in EC-CHAP’s Virtual Talent Showcase

CALLING ALL acoustic musicians, film makers, poets, comedians, jugglers, puppeteers, and creative artists of all ages are invited to perform in our virtual Talent Showcase! Here is an opportunity to showcase your work together with other “creatives” STREAMING LIVE in our VIRTUAL SETTING. Test ideas and concepts; and receive comments.

Our Talent Showcase is designed as a platform for local and regional performers to share their talent in front of a live audience. Showcases are NORMALLY scheduled at The Packing House on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, October through June. We will safely resume this schedule when we are able. Until then, we are offering a virtual Talent Showcase which will be prerecorded and streamed live each month.

If you would like to perform in our monthly virtual Talent Showcase, please call for instructions to submit your video and be placed on the schedule. You may have up to 15-minutes to present your work, and we encourage anyone - of any age - to share your talent.

We will compile your videos and present the July Talent Showcase as a LIVE Stream on Thursday, July 16th at 7:00pm. Please call 518.791.9474 for information and be placed on the schedule. The deadline to submit your video is July 10th.

Join us for an evening of “talent sharing talent”! Virtual Access at: www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming the day of the show.

A Look Back at EC-CHAP’s Film Screenings

EC-CHAP has been offering a monthly film screening in The Packing House for over four years. As a cultural organization, we believe that film as an art form, is a critical component in our offerings. EC-CHAP is committed to continue our series for as long as we are able. Our film programming has intersected with a number of genres and formats. The content has varied across music, art, classics, and popular – including documentaries, biographies, and entertainment.

As we have had a chance to reflect on our young past during this unique time, we would like to share a partial list of the films we have screened and Connecticut film makers who have shared their original works with us. We remain open to alternative filmmaking, and encourage suggestions from film makers, enthusiasts, and all those within the communities we serve. You can reach us at: info@ec-chap.org.

Here’s a partial list of screenings by general category:

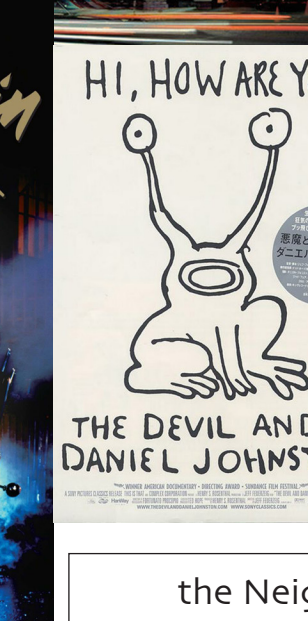
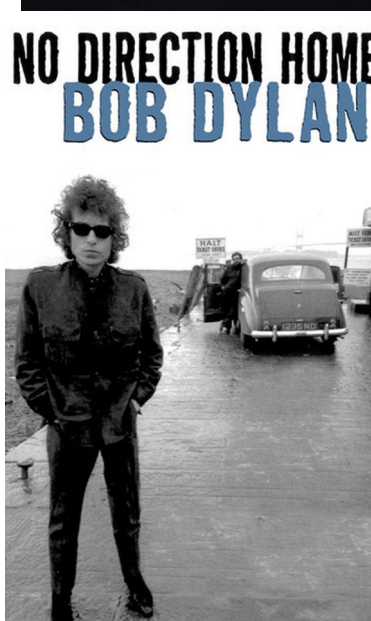
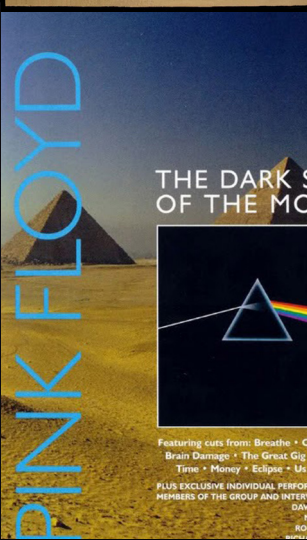
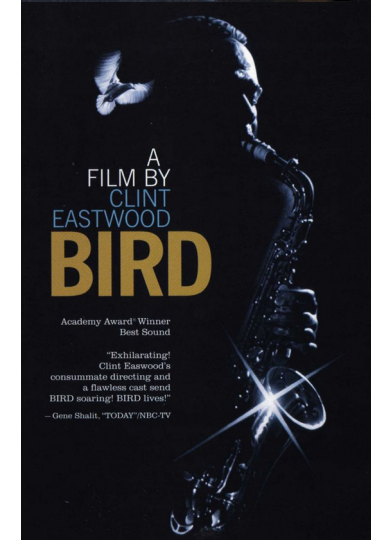
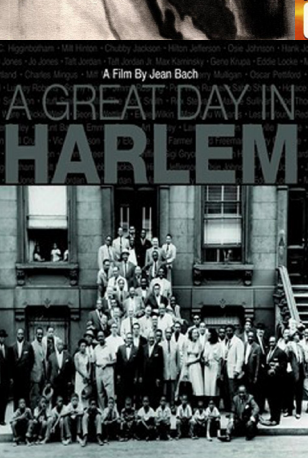
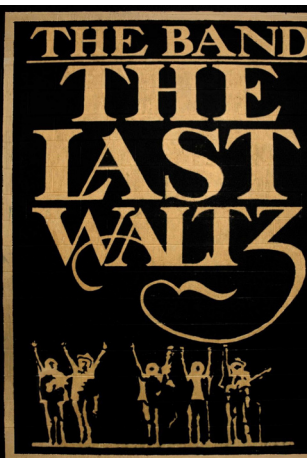
MUSIC - *One Trick Pony, The Last Waltz, Bird, Pink Floyd: The Making of the Dark Side of the Moon, No Direction Home, Purple Rain, Surrogate Valentine, A Hard Day’s Night, Buena Vista Social Club, Woodstock: 3-Days of Peace & Music, Pink Floyd: The Wall, The Doors, A Great Day in Harlem & The Spitball Story, Calle 54, and All Things Must Pass - The Rise and Fall of Tower Records.*

ART - *The Devil & Daniel Johnson, Basquiat, Don’t Worry He Won’t Get Far On Foot, Just Like Being There, Maudie, and Faces Places.*

CLASSICS - *It Happened One Night, Citizen Kane, Rear Window, Some Like It Hot, To Kill A Mockingbird, Casablanca, Cool Hand Luke, The General, and our annual holiday tradition, the screening of It’s a Wonderful Life.*

POPULAR – *Limitless, and our all-day Star Wars Marathon.*

CT FILM MAKERS – Local film maker Dan McGinley: screening debut of his original full length film, *Blues Legend* with Q&A; and Ruben Latre, Hostage Films, screening *A Retrospective in Fragmentation* - film shorts, narration, commentary, and Q&A.



the Neighbors paper
a little paper big on community

Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery Reopening July 25th

By Rebecca Zablocki



The Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery is one effort of the Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art & Performance. Through the community gallery we strive to provide all regional artists opportunities to display their artwork within our building. Craftspeople, artists, hobbyists and students, or anyone that has decided to create a work of art are welcome to apply to have their work on view, no experience needed.

It has been quiet at EC-CHAP while our volunteers have mostly been staying home to stay healthy during the last few months. As we prepare to reopen to the public with new guidelines and health and safety requirements, we took some time to spruce up our gallery space and we look forward to sharing the work of our regional creatives again.

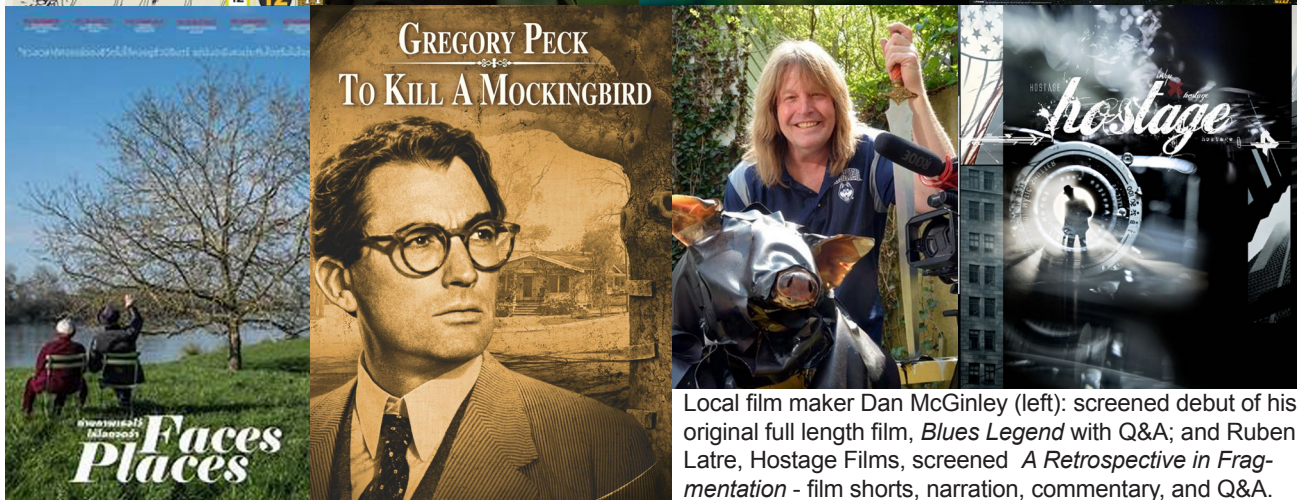
We encourage artists from all over our region to share their work with us; we need to stand with our community to stay healthy, fight for equality and against violence and one way to do that is through art. We are sure that new artists have emerged as people have spent more time at home. Did you find a new hobby and find your artistic voice during quarantine, or have you been inspired to create to spread knowledge and fight for change?

If you or someone you know would like to display art or be a part of the community gallery, feel free to contact us via email at communitygallery@ec-chap.org.

We plan to reopen on July 25th in compliance with CT State Phase-2 Guidelines, and will continue to display several artists that were on view before closures took place; with the show E.O. Smith meets EC-CHAP, the work of students, teachers and staff members from E.O. Smith High School. As of September 5, we will be diving back into our regularly scheduled shows.

Shows in the Community Gallery are on view for approximately 8 weeks at a time, open on Saturdays from 10 AM until 2 PM, we are closed between exhibitions. Located at 156 River Road in Willington, CT. Check out our website or social media for announcements and information regarding reopening WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG

Rebecca Zablocki is the EC-CHAP Artist-In-Residence, and Director, Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery. You may contact Rebecca at: communitygallery@ec-chap.org



Local film maker Dan McGinley (left): screened debut of his original full length film, *Blues Legend* with Q&A; and Ruben Latre, Hostage Films, screened *A Retrospective in Fragmentation* - film shorts, narration, commentary, and Q&A.

THE PIZZA PART...

As you may be aware, EC-CHAP offers an exclusive BYOB&FTM model for performances at the packing House. We have partnered with Willington Pizza House who has generously provided a 15% discount on eat-in and take-out orders the day of our performances. We would like to thank the folks at Willington Pizza (and Willington Pizza Too) for their continued support, and encourage you to keep them in the front of your mind when you're feeling those hunger pangs... (www.willingtonpizza.com)

And if you're feeling sassy... may we recommend "The Packing House" Pizza Special! The secret recipe was developed one dark, rainy night by EC-CHAP leadership after a show at The Packing House. A careful blend of visual art and culinary delight drove the aesthetics and taste which resulted in this masterpiece (the folks at Willington Pizza have the recipe in the back). Just in case, we're sharing the recipe here. Don't tell... (TPH Secret Recipe: Pepperoni, red onion, mushrooms, spinach, and roasted peppers)

The Packing House will reopen in the fall 2020. Please visit our website for upcoming virtual and live performances and events: www.thepackinghouse.us.

The Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery and the Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum will remain closed until further notice. Please check our website for reopening dates and times: www.ec-chap.org.

"America was not built on fear. American was built on courage, on imagination, and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand."

- Harry S. Truman



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Seeking New Board Members

The Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) is a 501.c.3 nonprofit cultural organization serving Eastern Connecticut and beyond.

EC-CHAP is interested in expanding its Board of Directors to ensure we have the capacity and skills to oversee the next phase of our work. We embrace diversity, and invite a broad range of creative and analytical talent to apply for three Board positions.

Please visit www.ec-chap.org/board2020 to learn more and to apply online. Questions may be addressed by email to: info@ec-chap.org; or by calling: 518.791.9474.

WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG

To all our contributors-
Thank you.



Truro, Truro, Truro

Turn around and quietly look at all those things that have been left on bookcases
and inside broken bottles sent to sea
I can hear the cry of gulls and they remind me of something, somewhere.
Where have all the summers gone? Dunes now much to tall for me to climb
The smell of salted black rocks insist I sit and think of all the waves that have
touched their faces.
I see you there in all the regrets, too timid to gather small shells that each tell
of far away places.
Why do the waves cover my tracks?
On the horizon I can catch just a glimpse of the fading light of day that held much
promise and innocent hopes
Small birds gather at the waters edge, dancing they notice me not
The days narrow and I must brush the sand from this moment
and begin the long, without you, journey home.

Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.

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